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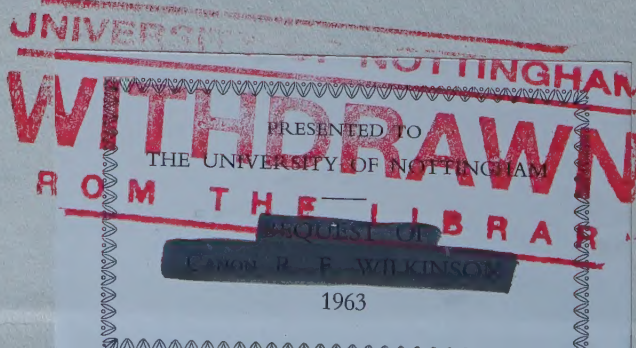
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THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA



B. Croatto.

VILLA D'ESTE—CYPRESSES AND LAKE.

Frontispiece.

THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA

BY

ARNALDO CERVESATO

TRANSLATED BY LOUISE CAICO

AND

MARY DOVE

WITH 407 ILLUSTRATIONS

T. FISHER UNWIN

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"PERHAPS THERE IS NO MORE IMPRESSIVE
SCENE ON EARTH THAN THE SOLITARY
EXTENT OF THE CAMPAGNA OF ROME
UNDER EVENING LIGHT."—*Ruskin.*

206882
Wilkinson Bequest.

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO THE PIONEERS OF CIVILISATION
IN THE CAMPAGNA ROMANA

THE thanks of the author are due to the artists who have so kindly allowed him to make use of some of their drawings: Aristide Sartorio, Henry Coleman, Onorato Carlandi, Enrico Serra, Duilio Cambellotti; and to those lovers of the Campagna who have furnished him with photographs: Giovanni Cena, Fausto Salvatori, Augusto Sindici, Conte T. Serraggi, Marchese B. Guglielmi, Dr. Oreste Sgambati (who with Giuseppe Fusinato accompanied him on many of his excursions), Mon. Lupi, Avv. P. Brugiotti, Dr. G. Cremonese (who was the first to induce the author to study the Campagna peasant), Dr. Badaloni, Dr. R. Simboli, E. Fontana, and Lieutenant T. Benigni.

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR

To most visitors to Rome the name "Roman Campagna" suggests only the plain immediately around the city, but Signor Cervesato uses it in its wider sense to include the whole of the old "Latina Tellus" (the Latin Land), a territory that extends for more than 120 miles along the shore of the Mediterranean and has a superficial area of 1,245 miles square. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, the name Latin Land has in some instances been used. The Italian words "Agro" and "Palude" have also been retained to describe the two great divisions of the Campagna. "Agro," which, literally translated, means "a rough field," is applied to the dry plain round Rome, and "Palude," literally "swamp," is the forest and marshland along the coast. The Latin Land includes both these divisions and also the surrounding hills, the first homes of the Latin tribes.

The Campagna has never before been described in its entirety, and even Italians were ignorant of the conditions of life prevailing at the gates of the capital. In order to qualify himself for the task of writing about it, Signor Cervesato, already well known as the author of "The Little Book of Heroes of the West," "Springtime of Ideas in Modern Life," and many other books, traversed its length and breadth on foot, on horseback, or by boat, penetrating its wildest recesses and studying the people and their ways.

Note by the Translator

He has thus been able to give a picture of absorbing interest of its scenery and its inhabitants. Happily modifications have already begun to take place in some of the details. The attention called to the misery of the people by this book and by the exertions of the "Committee for Schools on the Agro," and the reports of the Red Cross Society, have led to the establishment of a Bureau to protect their interests. Capitalists are beginning to see that there is an opening for the profitable investment of money in reclaiming the land and it is to be hoped that soon malaria and the "caporali," the two great curses of the country, will be things of the past.

This English edition does not profess to be a literal translation of the Italian book. Under the supervision of the author some passages specially addressed to Italian readers have been cut out; others which might have been obscure to foreign readers have been slightly amplified, and the aim has always been to present the author's ideas rather than his actual words.

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THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA

CHAPTER I

ROME AND THE CAMPAGNA

THE Campagna surrounds Rome on her seven hills like a vast silent sea, from which the Janiculum rises like the prow of a great ship, and amidst the undulating landscape of low hills and shallow valleys we still catch the echo of remote prehistoric life.

Great is the contrast to-day between this desert, where the most numerous habitations resemble the huts of the primitive aborigines of the Stone Age, and the city in its midst, with the dome of S. Peter's, that grand dome which Bramante imagined and the genius of Buonarrotti erected, unique under the vault of heaven, the towering dome of the great Basilica, which is perhaps the most ambitious effort of human power.

There is now no bond of union between Rome and the country around it, but when the city was founded, between it and the soil from which it sprang ran the rhythm of a harmony consecrated by labour and prayer. It was the husbandman who traced the limits of the first square city on the Palatine, and in it he continued to offer the fruits of the earth to the great mother of field and flock.

Recent discoveries have confirmed the truth of the

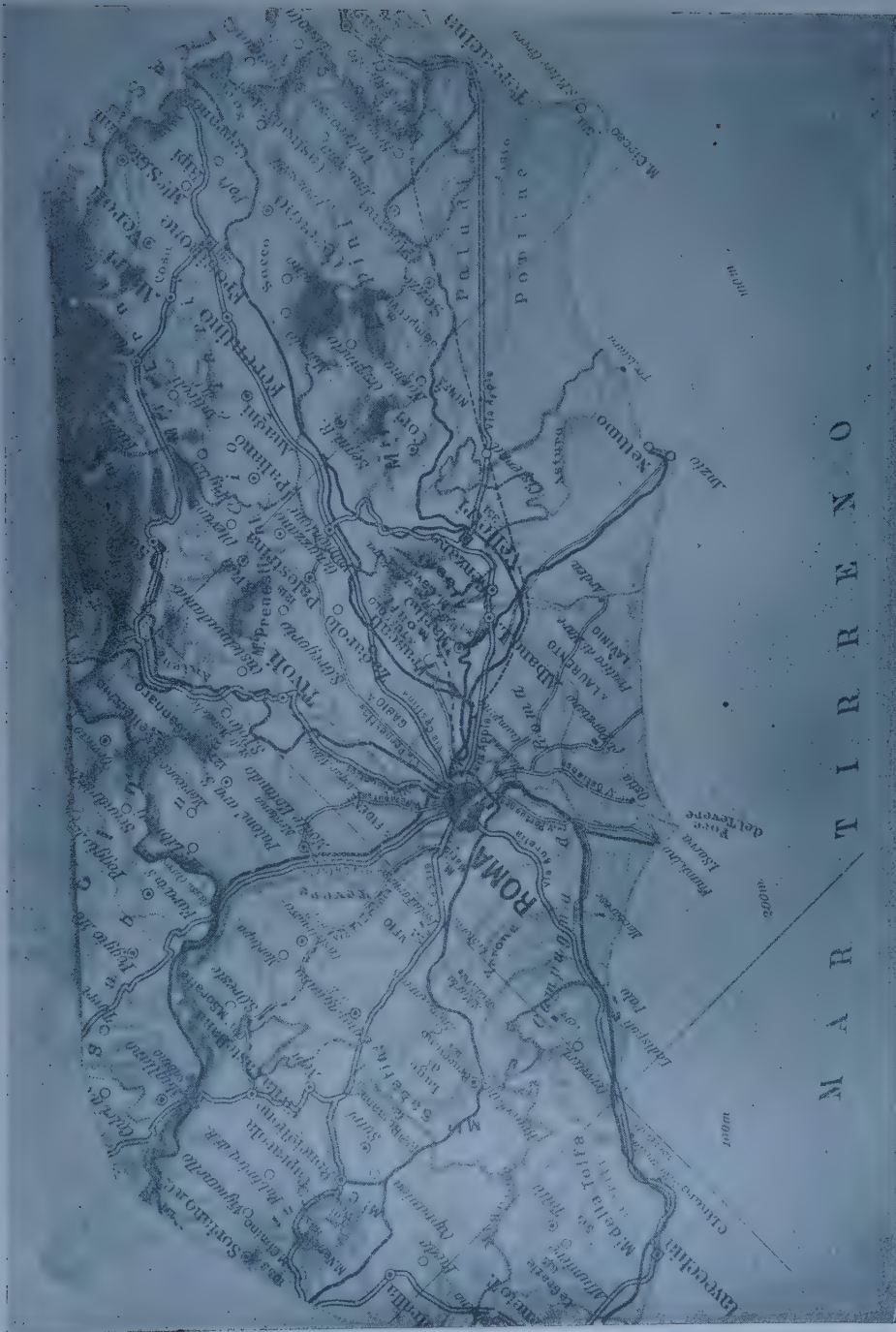
The Roman Campagna

traditions of the Latin annalists, showing that much that for years was considered fabulous is sober fact, and the blocks of tufa that have been brought to light on the Palatine now show accurately the perimeter of the original square city. Even the position of the principal gate of early Rome has been identified, the Porta Mugonia, as it was called, from the lowing of the kine which passed through it every evening on their way down to drink at the waters of the Velabrum. In those days the rocky slopes of the Saturnine Hill, afterwards known as the Capitoline, were studded with clumps of brushwood, the haunt of wild animals; laurels and holm-oaks covered the Aventine; the gnarled oak grew on the Cœlian, the osier (*vimin*) flourished on the Viminal, the beech (*eschio*) on the Esquiline, and the ilex on the Quirinal.

The city of Romulus, the husbandman and soldier, was at one with the soil and the rustic life around it; it was built as a refuge for the cattle and as a storehouse for the produce of the land and the booty taken in war. The she-wolf, colour of the soil and dweller in the plain, and the eagle, lord of the horizon, became its proud symbols.

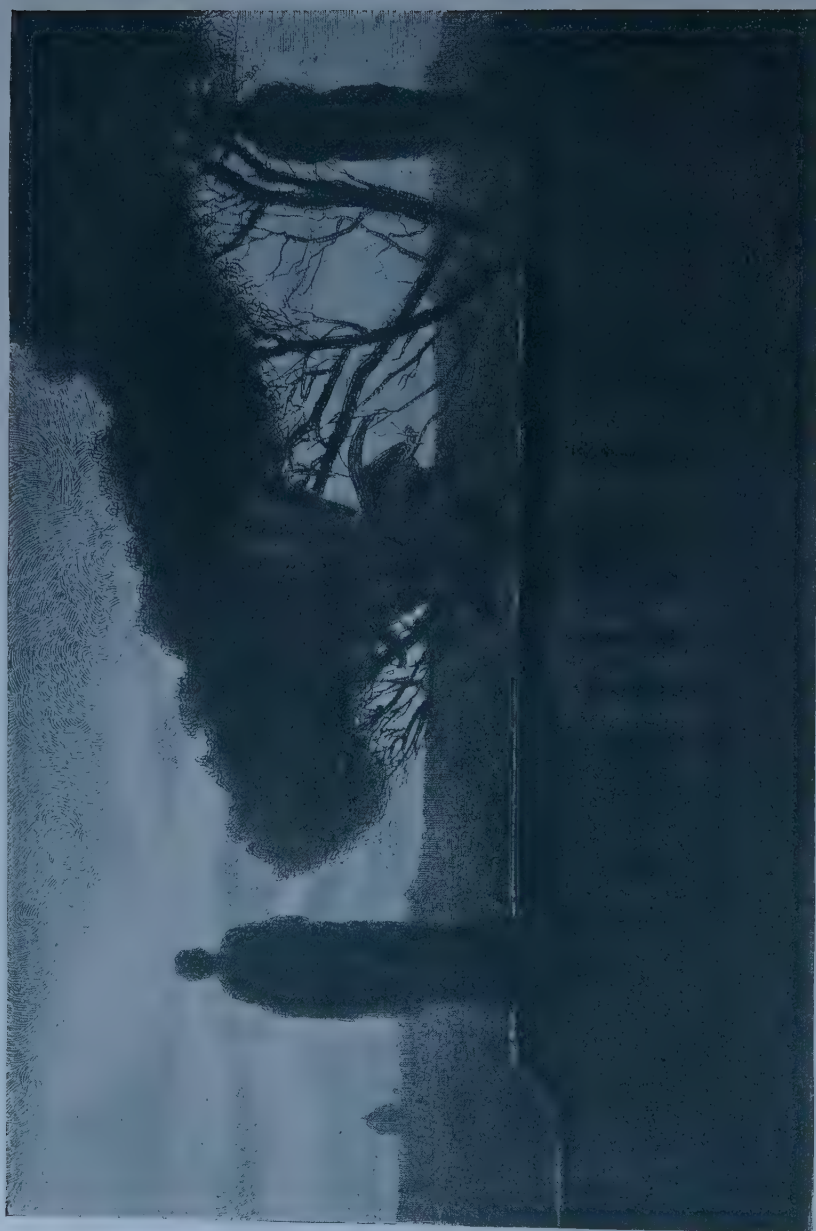
But when the eagle spreads his wings for conquest, leaving the wolf to guard the hearths and homes of the Latin country, what was the relationship between the city and the soil from which it had sprung?

The chain which bound the city to the soil, making the one the complement of the other, was strained and weakened when the Consular roads swept out far beyond the limits of its original territory and the aqueducts that marched like giants from the mountains poured all their water into the city, giving none to the plain through which they passed. In one day the city used as much water in her baths and fountains as would have sufficed for a year for



MAP OF CAMPAGNA.

De Agostini.



F. Vitalini.

QUIRINAL.

Rome and the Campagna

the needs of the inhabitants of the Campagna, where the distance between one well and another was a day's walk.

And was the original bond not still further weakened when the city brought marbles, bronzes, and statues from Greece and metals, perfumes, and precious woods from the East?

And later, when paganism gave place to Christianity, where was this bond? What relation was there between the wretched Campagna and the treasures, almost beyond the power of man to imagine or describe, created by Christian art? And these three famous altars, one in each of the Basilicas, made of gold and silver, studded with gems and pearls and inlaid with wood more precious than pearls, to whose splendour the whole universe had contributed, were they the altars of the soil?

When the new pagans of the Renaissance took from the Faith all its terrors, making it little more than the worship of a new goddess of Fortune, what had the gorgeous city to do with the desolate plain surrounding it? What bond could there be between Papal Rome, which combined the enchantments of Babylon and Alexandria with the splendour of Athens and was glorified by the brush of Raphael and Pinturicchio, and the squalid dwellers outside its gates?

The Campagna Romana is just the same to-day as it was when it inspired its earliest inhabitants with stern and lofty dreams. In its silent circle, full of infinite mystery, the germ of a primeval energy is still latent, the breath of its soil that urges on to danger and glory. Should any ask with what gifts it endowed its sons that led them to such heights, it would reply that it gave them the sense of duty, of virtue, of perseverance; the realisation of the necessity for action, for union, and for discipline.

The Roman Campagna

The Campagna forces upon man a continual fight for existence, and drives him forth beyond the limits of his own land to conquer the weaker nations whom Nature has not so disciplined. Those who had the courage to cultivate this barren land and build their homes on it developed the energy to go further afield and to make themselves masters of the fortune that awaits venturous spirits. And is it not the spirit of the soil that has imbued all the successive civilisations that have followed one another on it with the love of great buildings? They have all, without exception, constructed enormous public works and cyclopean buildings. It has given its sons an outlook as wide as its vast horizon, and a sense of sovereignty, dignity, and pride as tenacious as its hard red soil.

The general colour of the Campagna is a tawny red, paler where it undulates over the terraces of the slopes, greener in the flats where it expands into broad meadows, and the whole wide plain from one horizon to the other is bathed in a glorious sea of light. It is that wonderful, mysterious light, the "colour of the air of Rome," of which foreign writers speak: overhead, depths of sapphire blue which towards the horizon melt into a limpid, opalescent haze, where every colour, every vapour is etherialised and transmuted by the dreamy transparency of this fairy light. Under it the silent plain, starred by asphodels, to the Greeks, emblems of Hades, and flooded by pearly reflections, seems an Elysian field where time is naught and where every reality becomes only the fleeting aspect of an ever-vanishing illusion. Under it, the land no longer seems made of common clay, but as if Nature had endowed it with an indefinable power which destroys the weak, incites the hero to greatness, and is fateful to all.

The landscape is as romantic as those portrayed in



F. Vitalini.

HOLM-OAKS AND CYPRESSES ON THE PALATINE.



THE PALATINE FROM THE VELABRO.



THE CAMPAGNA WITH THE RUINS OF THE HOUSE OF THE QUINTILI.



TOMB OF POMPEY AT ALBANA.



THE CAMPAGNA FROM ROCCA DI PAPA.



THE AQUEDUCT OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS.



THE OLD APPIAN WAY.



PREHISTORIC HUT AND MEDIEVAL TOWER. MEET OF FOXHOUNDS.

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Poussin's pictures and Chateaubriand's writings, but at the same time it is classic in the crystalline precision of every line. The sapphire light that enfolds it ennobles it indescribably, seeming to widen the horizon and to open up mysterious, unfathomable distances behind its transparent veil. Dreams take shape and grow in this air, which might well be the atmosphere of a nobler planet inhabited by gods and heroes, the atmosphere that suggested to Goethe "a feeling of an eternal harmony of light and shade fused into a symphony of radiant transparency."

One of the special features is the transparent haze that envelops distant objects, softening all hard outlines and harmonising colours. Shadows are never hard and heavy, nor is foliage ever so dense that a ray of light cannot penetrate its mass. The colours of earth, sky, and sea melt into each other in a subtle gradation that no crude line ever breaks. In his landscapes, Claude Lorraine has given an admirable rendering of this light, which seems almost supernatural in its beauty. "This light is the light of Rome," says Chateaubriand, the first foreigner to write about the Campagna, and he continues :—

"From its barren soil rises the shadow of the great city. Deprived of her earthly power, she seems in her pride to have courted isolation, to have withdrawn herself from the other cities of the world, and, like a queen fallen from a throne, she nobly conceals her griefs in solitude.

"It is more than difficult, it is impossible to describe what one feels when Rome bursts on one's sight in the midst of her lost dominions ; she seems to rise from a tomb in which she had been laid to rest. . . . One understands the emotion, the amazement that fell upon the prophets when God showed them, in a dream of splendour, the vision of some city with which the destinies of His people were

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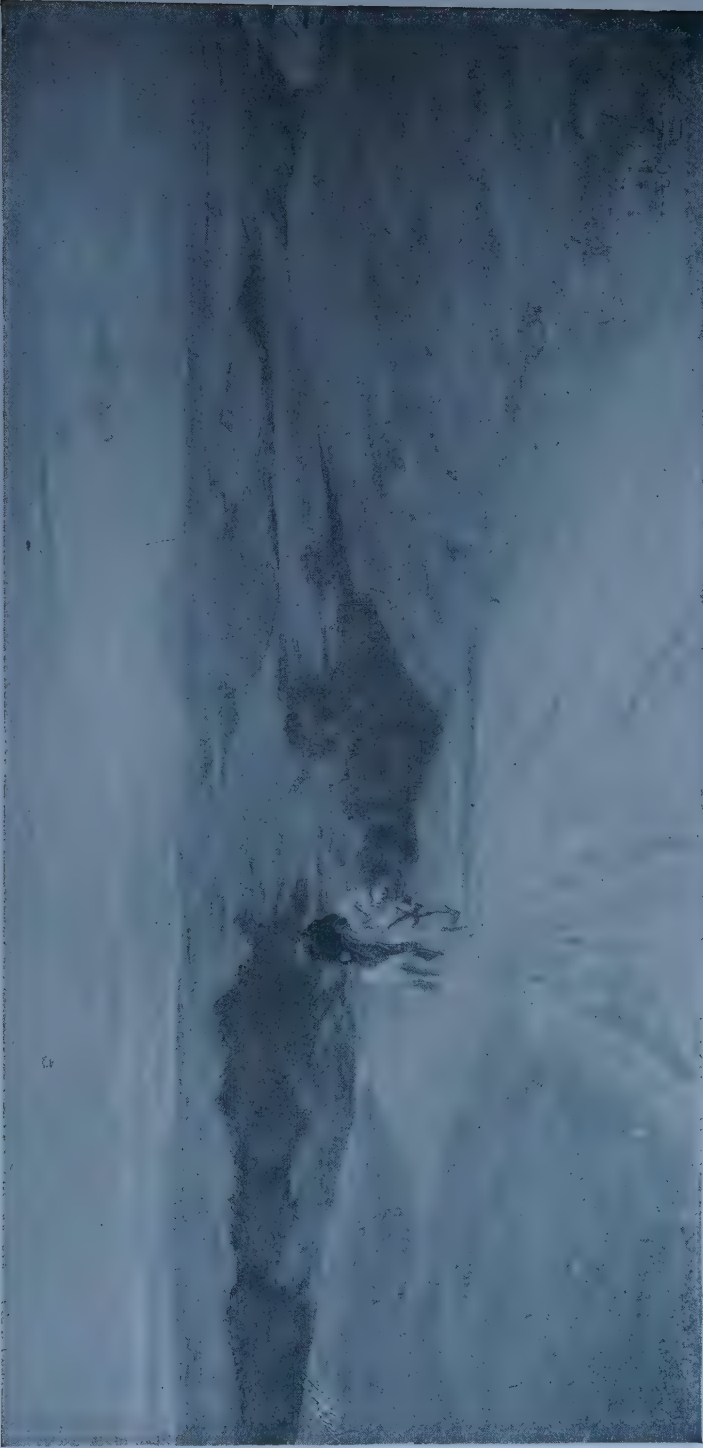
involved. . . . A host of memories press in, overwhelming and thrilling the soul at the sight of this Rome which twice assumed the dominion of the world, which was the heir not only of Saturn, but also of Jacob."

The designation "Roman Campagna" must be understood in a wider sense than that given to it in the Middle Ages when it replaced the primitive title of "Agro Romano," a name still given to it by many in the present day, which means "the territory of the Municipality of Rome."

In order to explain clearly the very extraordinary ethnographic character that makes the Roman Campagna unique, it is necessary to give to the name the same wide sense as that of the comprehensive title "Latina Tellus," for this name "Latina Tellus," the Latin Land, included the whole district extending along the Tyrrhenian Sea for two hundred miles, from Maremma in Etruria to Monte Circeo. Its natural, primordial centre is not Rome, but that group of volcanic hills including Monte Cavo and Monte Artemisio—sites sacred to worship before the Latin race existed—which rises almost isolated, like an outpost, overlooking the immense plain and its two natural divisions—the "Agro" to the north, the Pontine Marshes to the south.

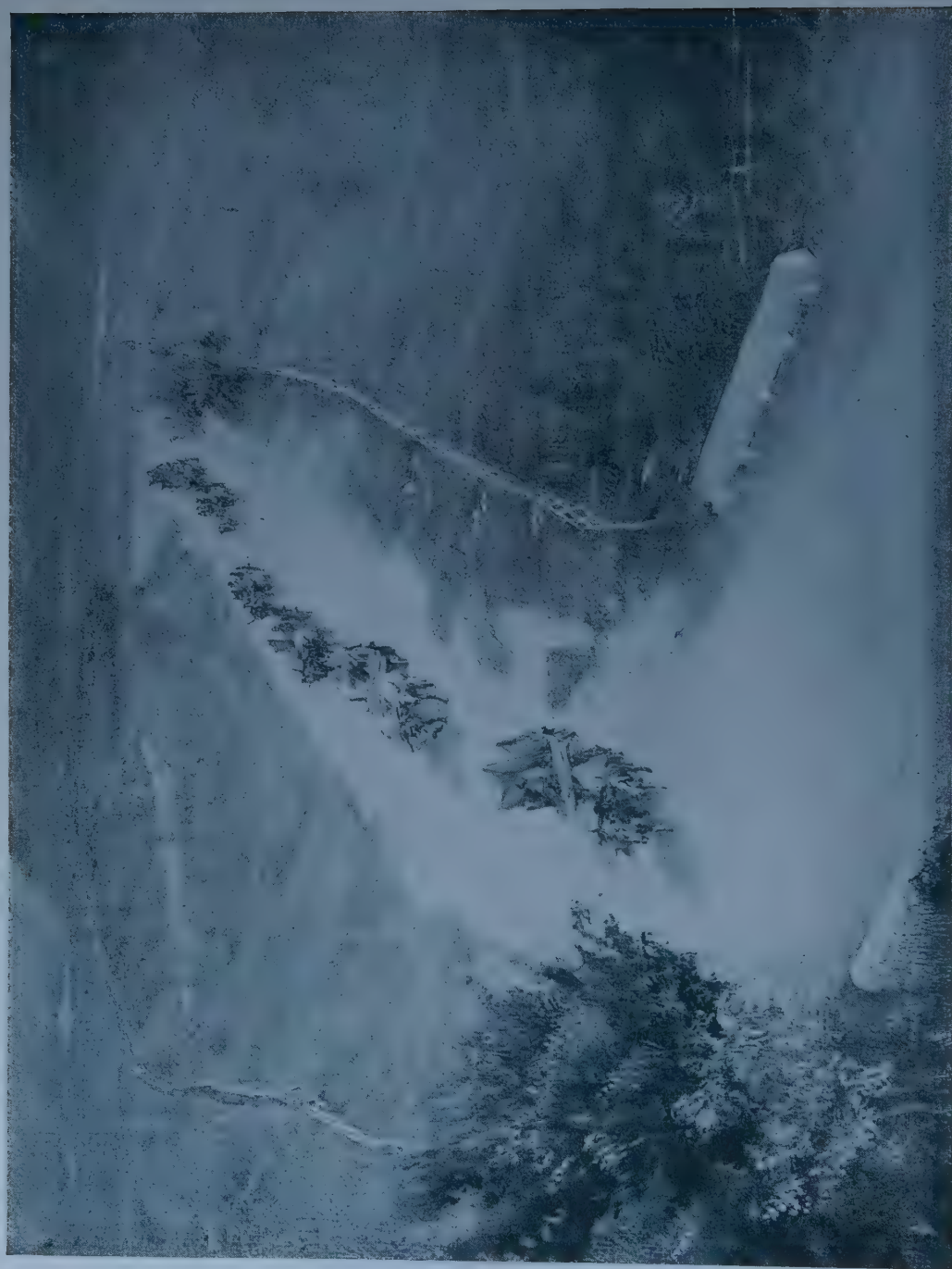
The true heart of Latium therefore is to the south of Rome, not far from the shore between Ostia and Circello, which may be called the shore of Ulysses and Æneas. When these heroes landed, it was overgrown by great pines and thick groves of laurels under whose shade the seafarers found repose. And on these shores, still shaded by the Virgilian woods, the first battles between the newcomers and the natives were fought, and there the history of Rome may be said to have had its beginnings.

It is now considered certain that the Roman "Agro" was never at any period either very fertile or very healthy.



"THE LONELY CAMPAGNA."

E. Colman



G. A. Sartorio.

VIA CASSIA.

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It was marshy in the pre-Roman ages, but it was densely populated, much more so than at any subsequent period ; and the extent of cultivation is proved by the remains of great drains and long subterranean canals that have come to light, though even then, as now, there was a larger area under pasture than under cultivation.

Rome gradually conquered the other cities of Latium, razing most of them to the ground (in Cicero's time the names of forty-three cities of Latium were recorded of which not a trace remained), thus reducing the country to a depth of desolation and to a state of unhealthiness almost equal to that of the present day. Nor did she, as some think, "colonise" it in the Republican and Imperial ages ; she only built villas on its healthy and pleasant hills and peopled restricted areas with rustic labourers, while speculators and patricians owned extensive farms cultivated by slaves, especially near the city walls. It is therefore a mere legend that the "Agro" was at one time a flourishing garden and a fruitful granary ; its most prosperous period was, I repeat, prior to the foundation of Rome, and even then it was in many parts marshy and unhealthy.

The invasions of Barbarians rendered the Campagna unsafe and completely depopulated it, and the feudal struggles maintained this state of affairs during the Middle Ages.

We may therefore believe, and the most recent researches authorise the belief, that this territory, destined to be the most famous in the world, witness of three civilisations, has never, either at its best or at its worst, differed much from what it is to-day : a wide, tawny plain whose open pastures are the home of oxen and horses ; difficult to cultivate in regular symmetrical fields ; water-logged in parts and covered in others with a short, sparse grass starred with asphodels.

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The denomination, "Latina Tellus," not only comprehends the plain but also the azure mountains which encircle the amphitheatre. Was it not on these mountains that Latin life began, when quaternary man beheld from their heights the mighty rivers rolling down, carrying the alluvial soil that formed the plains? Their descendants still live on these mountains. On the Sabines we find the Etruscan type with almond-shaped eyes; on the Albans, the original Roman type with symmetrical face, strongly marked features and round head still prevails; while on the Monte Lepini and the Volscians the people belong to perhaps the oldest of the aboriginal tribes, a fierce, simple people, extremely superstitious, whose angular, sallow faces speak of an Eastern origin.

The plain, the Campagna proper, is peopled by many different types. When, as frequently happened, it was almost depopulated, immigrants came from the surrounding districts, especially from the Abruzzi.

The Abruzzi and the Marche contribute largely to the nomadic population of the Campagna, which numbers more than 60,000, while the permanent inhabitants, about 3,000, are more generally of the Latin type. It is probable that the rare villages scattered over the immense area of this inhospitable land shelter the last descendants of the rustic tribes of pagan Rome.

All this plain is dotted with ruins—the ruins, visible and invisible, of all the civilisations that have flourished and decayed on Roman territory from earliest times to the present day. It is these ruins that form the link between Rome and her Campagna; of them Chateaubriand writes: "The desolation that surrounds her is like the desolation of Tyre and Sidon of the Scriptures; the silence and solitude are illimitable, as illimitable as was once the noise and tumult of

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man. It seems as though the malediction of the prophet still sounded in the air, 'Two things shall befall thee in one day, widowhood and barrenness.' The old Roman roads appear like the dry beds of winter torrents, and there where now no footstep passes they suggest the idea of the mighty currents of history that have passed over them. Few trees are visible, but the ruins of tombs and aqueducts are scattered everywhere like forests, native to a soil composed of funereal ashes and fragments of empire.

"Sometimes looking over the wide plain I thought I discerned in the distance the waving of rich cornfields, but as I drew nearer I found that my eye had been deceived by a tall growth of grasses, a barren harvest which nevertheless showed traces of ancient cultivation.

"From the barren ground there rises, here and there, a miserable hamlet which seems uninhabited. No smoke, no sound of life, no human form is seen save now and again that of some half-savage, fever-stricken creature, the sad custodian of these deserted hearths, wandering round like the spectres who in Gothic legends guard the gates of abandoned castles.

"Truly it seems as though none dared to succeed to the lords of the world in the land that was theirs; therefore these lands remain as Cincinnatus left them, lying to-day as when the plough of the ancient Roman drew the last furrow."

As Goethe truly says, we have in the ruins that fill the city and extend beyond her walls into the oblivion of the surrounding desert "the traces of a splendour and a force that overwhelm the mind."

In Rome herself these traces are endless, from the urns of the pre-Roman people to the altars of Augustus, from the company of crowned victors and idealised human deities to the work of the golden Byzantine and romanian ages, she

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holds them huddled together within her bounds. In the Campagna, also, there are mighty remains of bygone ages, but widely dispersed over its surface. Pre-Latin cities with their cyclopean walls are to be seen on the Volscian Hills ; aqueducts and monuments of the empire accompany the Consular roads ; catacombs extend their labyrinth of unknown passages underground as far as the sea ; imperial villas and those of the Renaissance and the Settecento stand amidst royal forests of pine and cypress on the heights of Tusculum and near the waterfalls of Anio ; square mediæval towers keep guard over the plain ; farms (*domus cultæ*) of all ages, but especially of early Christian times, are dotted here and there ; and everywhere are to be found the straw huts of the aborigines and the cave dwellings of the troglodytes. The Campagna, like Rome, is a world and an epitome of history from the dawn of civilisation . . . the history of man in his glory and in his shame.

CHAPTER II

THE CONSULAR ROADS

DIONYSIUS, the noted historian on Roman roads, wrote : “ I rank the magnificent paved Consular roads, constructed with unprecedented lavishness, together with the aqueducts and the drains, among the greatest works of the Romans, works which demonstrate incontestably the indisputable power of the Roman Empire at its zenith.”

To this Strabo adds : “ The paved roads of the Roman Empire wend their way along mountains that have been levelled, and over valleys that have been raised, and are constructed as if wagons as heavy as trading galleys were to pass along them.”

In the neighbourhood of Rome splendid stretches of these roads, which for centuries were the highways for all nations, still remain nearly intact. They did not start, as many people believe, from the Golden milestone, the “ Miliarium Aureum ” erected by Augustus in the Forum, but from the ancient gates in the wall of Servius Tullius. The beautifully gilded milestone, however, which stood in front of the Temple of Saturn, bore the names of the Consular roads, and the distance to the principal cities of Italy to which they led. The names of the old roads which started from the gates of Rome, and of those that diverged from them within the radius of ten miles, have been preserved for us in the writings of classic authors and in

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inscriptions, and are as follows: Towards the west, the Aurelia, the Vitellia, the Cornelia, and the Portuense; towards the south, the Ostiense, the Laurentina, the Campana, the Appia, and the Ardeatina; towards the east, the Latina, the Tuscolana, the Asinaria, the Labicana, the Prenestina or Gabina, the Collatina, and the Tiburtina or Valeria; towards the north, the Nomentana, the Salaria, the Flaminia, the Tiberina, the Cassia, and the Candis.

It is well known that Roman roads (especially the busiest and most important, such as the Flaminia, the Latina, the Appia) were lined by tombs which, "like a funeral procession, followed each other on either side of the way."

"We should note," observes Nibby, the great topographer of the Campagna, "the wisdom of the ancients who made use of the sides of the roads, outside the city walls, as places for sepulture, thus avoiding danger to the health of the living, and affording a wide scope to the genius of artists who adorned these tombs with magnificent friezes and carvings, providing an opportunity for the manifestation of grief, friendship and piety, and above all preaching an ever-present sermon to the passer-by." Varro explains the name of "monumentum" given especially to sepulchres, and to the custom of erecting these along the road in the following words: "*Monimenta quæ in sepulcris: et fuisse et illos esse mortales.*"

The road, well paved with polygon stones, was bordered for the first six or seven miles with imposing tombs, and after that it assumes its true character, that of a great ribbon uniting the city to the provinces.

The "itineraries," of which parts were preserved up to the Middle Ages, gave a list of the stopping-places, indicating their importance and grade; they were called



RUINS ARE THE FLOWERS OF THE OLD APPIAN WAY.



HOUSE BUILT ON AN OLD TOMB ON THE APPIAN WAY.



PEASANTS' HUTS AMONG THE RUINS.



OLD APPIAN WAY. TRACES OF SPLENDOUR AND DESTRUCTION.

The Consular Roads

“Municipium, Civitas, Vicus, Mansio, Positio,” and “Mutatio.” These last three names deserve special notice, for they are only used in itinerary nomenclature, pointing out the use of the places named. For instance, the name of “Mansio” was given to a station which, though neither village nor town, contained one or more hostelries with sleeping accommodation for travellers; “Positio,” a name only found in the “Maritime Itinerary,” indicated that there were lodgings for sailors at that place; it occurs along the shores of the Mediterranean from Porto as far as the mouth of the Rhone; “Mutatio” was the name given to a station where change of horses could be obtained (*cursus publicus*).

Travelling along these roads was pleasant, especially during the glorious centuries of Rome’s triumphant prosperity. Instead of passing through malaria-stricken zones, the roads ran between sumptuous villas, the ancient magnificence of which may still be gathered from the dimension of the ruins discovered and the beauty of the works of art brought to light. “They passed through villages inhabited by rustics, the country not being squalid and deserted as it is to-day, and sumptuous temples embellished them,” writes the historian with a faith which recent researches have rendered less tenable.

The roads were measured by means of stone pillars placed at every mile (*lapides miliari*), the mile being a thousand steps, a little more than 1,500 metres.

By whichever of these old classic roads we travel, we find that the Roman Campagna is not a plain but an almost continuous succession of tufa hills and valleys, with here and there a stretch of level ground. But few people are met with along the silent roads; a few sunken faces peer out from the doors of hovels and huts, and quickly with-

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draw. What fear, what suspiciousness, the results of centuries of oppression, still weigh upon these men! We are here in a region where solitude has reigned supreme for at least fifteen centuries. In pre-Roman times, various parts of this malaria-stricken country were rendered healthy by a marvellous system of canals, so that it was easy for the Romans of the Republic, and more especially for those of the Empire, to colonise an area which, if not large, was at least more extensive than that now inhabited.

Even to-day it would be possible to use the ancient drains of the Etrusco-Roman epoch, which in remote times served to feed fountains, to irrigate dry land, to drain damp soil, and to purify the air. Some of these, in spite of ten centuries of neglect, are still in use, bringing water to troughs and preventing the formation of swamps. Many of the old reservoirs or "*piscinæ*" and cisterns of Roman construction might also be made use of to-day.

The minor roads, of which there was a thick network in the Campagna, might also be traced, but constant usurpation and illegal enclosing by landowners, who did not scruple to seize public property for the enlargement of their private possessions, has led to the destruction of many of them.

It would be a noble and useful work to retrace the course of these ancient roads, and by showing how much had been done for the Campagna in past ages, archæology would render a service to the present day by providing a guide for those improvements on which New Italy has set her heart, and which cannot be postponed much longer.

When the Empire fell, barbarian invasions dispersed the greater part of the population of these regions, malaria resumed her sway, and the country became once more a desert. It was then that the inhabitants of the low ground were driven to the Alban and Sabine Hills, whose heights



COLUMNS OF THE THEATRE OF OSTIA.



G. A. Sartorio.

THE OLD ROAD IN THE FOREST OF LAURENTIUM.



THE WALL AT PORTA S. GIOVANNI.



THE OLD APPIAN WAY AND THE TOMB OF CECILIA METELLA.

The Consular Roads

became the refuge of the people who for centuries had dwelt on the plain. Since then solitude hovers over it, and it was to repeople this solitude that in the eighth and ninth centuries the Popes tried to revive colonisation. They established about twenty agricultural centres widely scattered throughout that immense territory, and these centres received the name of "domus cultæ."

But the devastations had been so great that colossal measures would have been necessary to restore prosperity to agriculture and these "domus cultæ," of which the greater number are still standing, remained tiny oases in the midst of the boundless desert.

In its present state the Campagna, by its prevailing sadness, produces an impression of unrivalled and special solemnity; and how can this rugged golden-yellow desert, starred with asphodels, appear other than solemn, for is it not the tomb of centuries of civilisation?

If we leave Rome by the Porta San Paneragio, after we have passed the aromatic pine woods of Sacchetti, the most silent of all the Consular roads, the Via Aurelia opens up before us leading across the lonely plain.

It is another world, filled with sadness. The description given by an eminent artist of another road may be applied to this one also. "As we advance along the road, an unnatural silence begins to weigh upon the landscape. Songs die away, no joyous voices are heard; the passers-by greet each other sadly; fever-stricken ploughmen greet a herdsman. In the hamlets, in the miserable taverns, we meet men who are our countrymen and yet look as if they belonged to a strange race; indigenious to the soil, their countenances are battered like the ruins of this land, and upon them we read the history of centuries of endurance."

The road runs mile after mile through a dry, thirsty land;

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now and then stagnant water gleams malevolently through the reeds. We seem to have wandered into a country that has been dead for centuries, to have plunged into the Styx ; our civilised life becomes unreal."

"Life along the road is primeval. A few peasants are at work in the flat fields that stretch right and left to the horizon. Occasionally one meets a rough rider or a shepherd, partly clad in goatskin, or a cart drawn by a couple of slow-moving oxen.

"For miles the depressing solitude is unbroken by house or hut, not even a shady tree or a fountain is to be seen."

The same description applies to all the Consular roads ; after leaving the city they all lead through solitary wastes to the amphitheatre of hills that surrounds the vast plain on three sides and to the Tyrrhenian Sea on the fourth.

The Romans did not begin to pave their roads till a comparatively late period. The first to be paved was the Via Appia, about the middle of the third century B.C., the Carthaginian highways being the models which the Romans followed.

Some of these old roads date from the time of the first settlers, and in the first centuries of the Republic were still mere paths, so narrow that if a rider met a man on foot the latter had to stand aside to let the horseman pass.

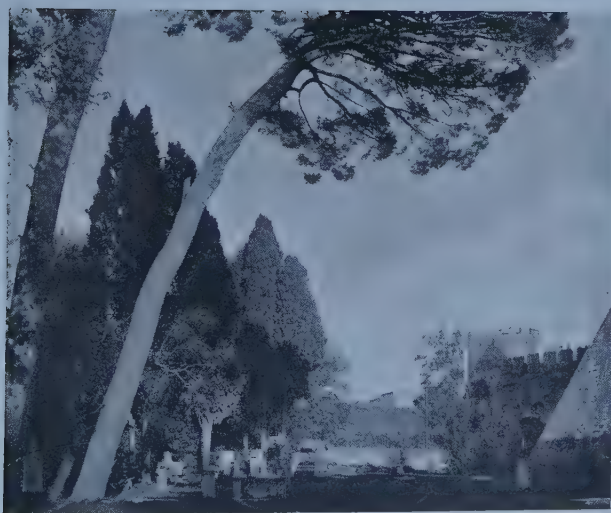
The inauguration of the Via Appia was a great event for the still primitive city, as it was broad enough for two wagons, drawn by a couple of oxen, to pass one another when they met.

"The first road, then, chronologically, was the Via Appia."

"Constructed by the Censor Appius Claudius Cæcus, it led from Rome to Capua ; at a later period it was



VIA S. SEBASTIANO.



PORTA S. PAOLO.



NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF THE COMMUNE OF ROME ON
THE VIA CASSIA.



O. Carlandi.

VIA TIBERINA SEEN FROM FIDENE.



THE OLD APPIAN WAY.



THE OLD APPIAN WAY.



THE OLD APPIAN WAY.



THE OLD APPIAN WAY.

The Consular Roads

extended to Brindisi and was regarded as the queen of roads. It was paved with square stones laid so closely together that there were no interstices. This road remained in perfect order until the time of Justinian.

Another splendid road was the Via Flaminia, which was made a century later by Caius Flaminius, Censor; from Rome it traversed Etruria to Rimini. Here it divided into two branches: the one known to the present day as the Via Emilia, and the other was also called Via Emilia, and ran through the Province of Gallia Cisalpina.

The Via Campana ran parallel with the Via Appia to Campania, starting from the Celimontana Gate, and eventually joined the Via Tusculana and Albana. The Via Aurelia started from Porta Aurelia and ran along the shore of the Mediterranean by Luni as far as Genoa. Between the Via Aurelia and the Via Flaminia was the Via Cassia which led into Etruria.

One of the finest and longest of the roads was the Via Valeria, a continuation of the Via Tiburtina, which crossed the territories of the Sabines, the Equians and the Marsians, reaching as far as the country of the Pelignians. The Via Latina began at Porta Capena, crossed the Liri valley and joined the Via Appia at Teano. The Via Ostia ran along the left bank of the Tiber to the mouth of the river below Ostia; commercially it was very important. The Via Salaria was so called because by it the Sabines brought salt to the city.

The continuous story of the Campagna unfolds itself in panoramic view as we pass along the Consular roads; even now not far from the walls of the city, side by side with splendid Latin monuments, we find the hut of the

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primitive shepherd, the cave of the still more ancient nomad: such a hut as that which sheltered Evander, such a cave as that where Hercules vanquished the thief. The distant ages, before Italian civilisation began and Greece was still young, have left their traces, fraught with mystery, and "Roma Quadrata" seems modern, compared to the prehistoric relics that meet us here.

Here we wander with those nomadic tribes whose graves have recently been discovered beneath the Forum, along the paths where the Pelasgians and Sicanians paused to celebrate the rites of Spring.

Between the Via Tiburtina and the Via Prænestina, on the eastern heights, stood "Tibur" (Tivoli), an ancient Sicanian town, with its dependencies of Mutitola and Siceleon. On the plain, at the foot of the hills, lay "Collatia" (the hamlet of Lunghezza), "Gabii" (Pantano), and on a hill farther south "Præneste" (the modern Palastrina), with its famous temples.

Between the Via Prænestina and the Via Labicana, to the east and south the Volscian territory of "Labicum" and "Lagnano" lay nestled on the Latin slopes.

To the south too is the country of the Latin League, while to the north, between the Tiber and the Via Salaria, were Nomentana, Tiburtina, and Valeria; on the hill, above, where the Aniene and the Tiber meet, stood "Antemnæ," a Latin stronghold.

Between Via Latina and Via Appia, on the rim of the earliest Latin crater, stood "Castrimœnium" (Marino).

Below Marino, in the place now occupied by the Colonna Park, stretched "Ferentinum Nemus," the "Caput Aquæ Ferentinæ," sacred to the deity of that name and celebrated as the annual meeting-place of the tribes.

Close to the shore of Lake Albano, between it and



THE OLD APPIAN WAY.



VIA CASILINA.



VIA PRENESTINA.



VIA ANGELICA.

The Consular Roads

the mountain that rises from it, stood the stronghold of "Alba Longa" (Palazzolo), the city promised to Æneas by the oracle, the metropolis of Latium, the glorious mother of thirty cities.

On the summit of "Monte Albano" (Monte Cavo) was the magnificent temple of Jupiter Latialis, at which the Latin confederates assembled once a year for a solemn feast, a feast rendered yet more important by the Romans. It is recorded that forty-seven cities sent priests and delegates to take part in this re-union, and in the distribution of the flesh of the bull sacrificed to the protecting god. These meetings were both religious and political in character, and a large fair was held at the same time.

It is generally supposed that "Ancient Fabia" was on the mountain peak immediately below Monte Cavo, where Rocca di Papa now stands.

On the lip of the old crater, to the east of Monte Albano, on the isolated peak called Castel di Lariano, rose the powerful fortress of "Algidum," famed for its warfaring enterprises and for the temple of "Diana Algidensis."

Between the Appia and Ardeatina roads, below Albano, lay Bovillæ, one of the colonies of Alba Longa, or, according to others, of Corioli. Lower down on the slopes stood the rich "Apriola" and "Magilla," sites that are now hardly recognisable.

It is probable that "Politorium" stood between the Via Ardeatina and the Tiber, nearer to Rome, on the hill of Casal Diruto; and the locality now known as Dragoncella between the Via Ostiense and the Tiber, was the site of "Ficane." We here skirt the maritime part of Latium, formerly called "Laurentum," from the abundance of laurel that covered the shores, where, according to

The Roman Campagna

tradition, the battle between Turnos and Æneas took place.

“Lavinium” stood on a hill three miles from the sea, to the east of Laurentum, a site now occupied by Pratica di Mare.

Such was the Roman Campagna, the plain in the centre of which the Latins, Sabines, and Etruscans united in founding the city on the seven hills. The blending of these races produced a people of great vitality and distinctive character, whose energy soon carried them beyond the walls of their city to the ends of the earth.

The Campagna, so rich in memories, august theatre of the first struggles of the Latins, was soon too small for their ever-increasing activities; they carried their wars further afield, and very early in the history of Rome the scene of their original conflicts became an oasis of peace, and on the pleasanter parts of the plain and on the slopes of the hills suburban villas rose, where warriors like Scipio and statesmen like Cicero discoursed on philosophy, on nature, and on the reason of things.

Under the Empire these villas became as sumptuous as the palaces of Asiatic satraps. A striking example of this luxury is to be seen in the ruins of Hadrian’s Villa, built when the ancient Roman virtues were dead and the spirit of Christianity had not yet triumphed.

In course of time Byzantium became Constantinople; from afar on the Consular roads appear the hordes of Barbarians. The Campagna is deserted, malaria once more takes possession, and it sinks into a silence only broken by the passing of the invading Huns, Goths and Longobards, those fierce demolishers of cities and monuments.

At this epoch a special nomenclature comes into use



VIA FLAMINIA.



VIA CLAUDIA AND THE CASTLE OF CORNAZZANO.



ON THE VIA PRENESTINA.



MEET OF THE FOXHOUNDS.



A "DOMUS CULTA."



MEET OF FOXHOUNDS AT PONTE DI SCHIZZANELLO.



A. Noci.

CHURCH OF SS. NERO AND ACHILLEO, ON THE APPIAN WAY.

The Consular Roads

in the writings and documents relating to landed property in the Roman province. An estate of limited extent continues as formerly to be called a "fundus," but the aggregation of several of these estates forms a "massa," and several "massæ" form a "patrimonium." This name was later applied to Papal properties, but always in an administrative sense, never political. In the fourth century we find an allusion to a "massa-prænestina," belonging to the Fulgerita family, in the territory of Præneste, and another "massa-mandelana" formed of estates in the "pago di Mandela."

There were also the famous "domus cultæ." These were important agricultural centres, founded in the eighth century by Pope Hadrian I., which comprised lands variously cultivated, and a certain number of dwellings not always grouped together but rather scattered about on the land, and therefore quite distinct from the so-called "casali." They really were colonies, or inhabited centres, large scattered villages provided with a small church, and built with the view of furthering cultivation and improving the Roman Campagna.

These agricultural colonies were preferably built upon the sites of villas or other ruined buildings. In the ninth and tenth centuries some of them were founded for military purposes, as a defence against the incursions of the Arabs. It was then that the numerous towers scattered along the sea-shore rose at the expense of ancient monuments to guard against the dangers ever threatening not only from the sea but also from the land. The "domus cultæ" were turned into strongholds, surrounded by walls and provided with towers. These were the first inland watch-towers, and in the eleventh century, at the time of the investiture struggles, their number was greatly

The Roman Campagna

increased, and later the “Castrum” or fortified castles were erected.

From the sixth to the ninth century we find the land around Rome divided as follows: *Patrimonium Appiæ*, which comprised all the land to the right of the Via Appia as far as the sea, and to the left as far as the Via Latina; *Patrimonium Labicanense*, which extended from Via Latina to Via Prænestina; *Patrimonium Tibertinum*, which included all the land between Via Prænestina and the Tiber; *Patrimonium Sabinense*, which occupied the territory towards the Sabine Hills; *Patrimonium Tusciæ*, along the bank of the Tiber; *Patrimonium Urbanum*, which included the property of the Church, inside the city walls. In the nomenclature of the “massæ” and of the estates which composed them, we find for centuries the names of their first owners, recalling the most illustrious families of Imperial Rome. Papal authority was fast spreading in the province of Rome during these struggles, so much so that in the sixth century the possessions of the Church had become very extensive. Its estates, scattered not only throughout Italy, but also on the islands and along the coast of the Mediterranean, were admirably administered by deacons, so that at the time of the Longobard invasion the Papal authority was supreme over a great part of the country, in fact if not in name.

One invasion followed another, and in the ninth century, on the Via Severia along the sea-coast, from Torre Astura to Torre Flavia, the number of watch-towers was greatly increased, to guard against the landing of the Saracen pirates.

Gradually a kind of feudalism was created, the “domus cultæ” giving place to the “castra” or castles. All the “castelli” in the Campagna, such as Castel Arcione, Castel



VIA SALARIA.



VIA TUSCULANA.



VIA CASILINA.



VIA ARDEATINA.

The Consular Roads

Malnome, Castel Romano, Castel Fusano, Castel Gandolfo, derive their names from these castles. The land belonged to the Church, but the feudal estates were held on unbreakable leases.

Feudalism reigned in all the three divisions of the Campagna, plain, hill, and shore, in the first centuries after the year 1000.

Three centres of life, therefore, remained in the lonely desert of the Campagna: the feudal castle, the church, the hamlet. The "casali," or hamlets, were on the low ground, in sheltered but unhealthy positions, while the castle was on the height. They were only inhabited by the peasants who worked on the estate.

The nobles and their estates were under the rule of the Municipality of Rome, which from the twelfth century exercised jurisdiction from the bridge of Ceperano to the River Paglia (over a hundred miles), and in the fourteenth century drew the greater part of its revenue from the Campagna.

In the fifteenth century the decline of agriculture and the abandonment of the rural centres increased, and as feudal castles were turned into small municipalities ("castelli Romani"), agriculture gave place to pasturage, and from this time dates the periodical immigration of the Abruzzi shepherds.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century the land was less divided up than formerly; the castles showed signs of losing their character of fortresses; a new system of rule, less feudal in character, but not less tyrannical, laid waste the country and oppressed the people. Towns, castles, and lands passed by right of heredity, by marriage, by sale, or by edict of the Pope, from one family to another, and from the rightful owner to the Papal See.

The Roman Campagna

This state of things has remained almost unaltered to the present time.

The seventeenth century was a notable epoch in the history of the Campagna. Nearly all the hamlets now inhabited were founded then, and it was the century of great, though unsuccessful, enterprises on the part of the popes and of some of the landlords. A pontifical edict offered a reward of a crown-piece for every olive-tree planted, and another edict bestowed any waste land on whoever would cultivate it. Giovanni Battista Doni, the then famous writer on agriculture, argued that the land could be rendered salubrious by cultivation, and acting on his advice the Borghese family at Pratica del Mare (the ancient Lavinium) and the Sacchetti family at Ostia built villages and brought families of labourers from the Marche and from Tuscany, to whom they gave land on a perpetual lease at a very low rent.

During the eighteenth century the improvement of the Campagna was continued. Large villas were erected with their complement of dependent buildings, most of which are now in a state of squalor and ruin.

The nineteenth century also began most auspiciously with the passing of Pius VII.'s famous agrarian laws. These, however, were never enforced; the condition of the dwellers in the country went from bad to worse, till, at the end of the century, a state of slavery was tolerated at the very gates of the city.

Solitude now reigns on the once triumphal ways, and the dreary silence is only broken now and then by the voice of the foxhounds. So great is this solitude that on one of the most important of the roads, the Via Aurelia, the first habitation is not met with till Malagrotta, seven miles from Rome. Here there is a fountain, a farm-



VIA AURELIA.



MEET OF FOXHOUNDS ON VIA AURELIA.



FARM OF CASTEL DI GUIDO.



WAYSIDE FOUNTAIN ON VIA AURELIA.



CASTLE SANTA SEVERA.



CIVITAVECCHIA.



WATCH-TOWER NEAR VIA AURELIA.

The Consular Roads

house, a tiny church, and a village of huts standing a little back from the road enveloped in the silence of the vast plain.

Ten miles further on we reach Bottaccia, where Marcus Aurelius used to retire to meditate in a palace erected by Antoninus Pius, and here, amidst the squalor of the present day, fine marble sarcophagi have been found.

Then another farmhouse, a barn, a church, and a large, well-kept cemetery constitute Castel di Guido, and twelve miles further on, beyond the River Arrone, lies the hamlet of Polidoro.

Further west, we come upon Selva la Rocca, once inhabited by the Etruscans, in whose tombs fine specimens of jewellery have been found. Not very far from this a torrent, the ancient "Paritomium," runs into the sea where the tower of Palidoro stands, one of the many mediæval outposts scattered along the Tyrrhenian shore.

From this point the Via Aurelia skirts the sea continuously, with the wide, rugged plain on its right.

We soon reach the remarkable hamlet of Palo, consisting of a castle belonging to Prince Odescalchi, which is never occupied, and of a village completely deserted, but which can boast of houses still bearing a number on the doors, and with windows in a perfect state of preservation, ready for occupants; there are signboards over the shops, streets with names clearly legible: only inhabitants are wanting, and of these there is no vestige. This is a truly interesting phenomenon, unique in the Campagna, where it is easier to find men without houses than houses without men.

The sixteenth-century castle, enormous, massive, square, is defended at the four corners by round turrets; it has

The Roman Campagna

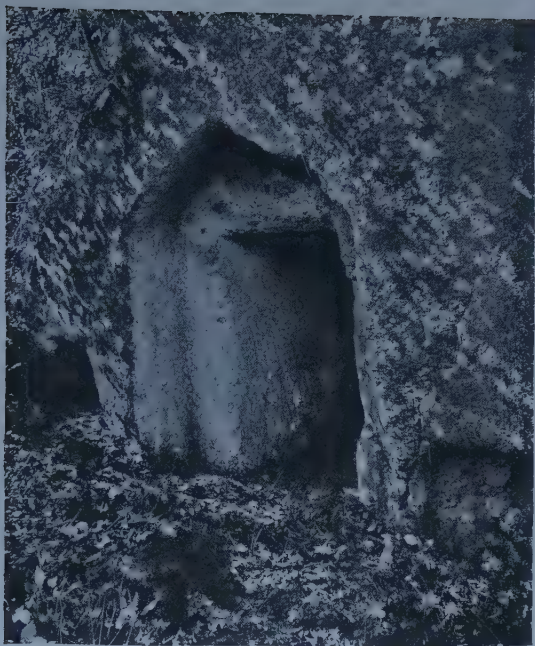
an external enclosure protected by square towers and a parapet projecting over the sea; the formidable crenellated wall and the great keep so full of life in past centuries are now silent. Over the whole deserted village hangs a strange loneliness, mute witness of some unexplained mystery; a tragic silence falling from the gloomy towers blends with the sinister silence of the lifeless country, lulled by the murmur of the breaking waves.

Beyond Palo the Via Aurelia takes a northward direction.

Twenty-seven miles from Rome, beyond the hamlet of Osteria Nuova, the castle of Santa Severa stands out grimly against the sea. It is a gloomy construction dating back to the tenth century, built close to a church dedicated to the saint of that name. Here, in a remote era, the Pelasgians built a harbour, an emporium, an arsenal and a village, enclosing the whole by a wall of large polygon stones, of which only a few fragments remain.

Still skirting the sea, the Via Aurelia passes Santa Marinella, a smiling village amid the gloomy landscape, and beyond, stands another small castle with some fishermen's cottages on a low promontory; wheeling round Capo Lunare, it penetrates into a still more desolate region, resembling a gloomy, troubled sea where, for mile after mile, the ruins of the watch-towers built as a defence against the Barbarians are the only trace of human occupation. An everlasting, unnatural silence, which seems like that of another planet, reigns in this wild ghostly land, that harbours neither man, beast, nor bird, a silence made deeper and gloomier by the moaning of the sea.

One day's solitude in the Campagna (as its rare visitors can testify) is sufficient to make one lose all notion of time and distance. When only six hours from Rome,



ETRUSCAN TOMB.



CORNETO TARQUINIA.



A. Montroné.

TOMB OF CECILIA METELLA, ON THE APPIAN WAY.

The Consular Roads

barely twenty miles along the Via Aurelia, one walks as in a dream, separated from the city and its busy life by uncountable days and months.

Civitavecchia becomes dimly visible now in the far distance, dominated by the remaining forts which worthily guard the small white city. They were designed by Michael Angelo, constructed by Sangallo, and the magnificent port, of which Pliny the Younger gives a graphic description, is the work of Trajan; the arsenal was designed by Bramante; the fountain near the port is due to Vanvitelli.

After passing through the little town, which still preserves traces of the genius of its builders, the Via Aurelia continues to run along the sea-shore. The scorched plains of the arid primordial landscape reappear in broad, almost flat stretches, crossed by canals overgrown with rushes, unchanged since the mighty forces of the Ice Age moulded the outlines of the shore.

The silence of the desert is unbroken, save by the herds of horses and oxen that graze the scanty grass on the brow of the hillocks.

The road runs on between the wild sea and the forlorn plains from Civitavecchia to Corneto (Corneto Tarquinia), an Etruscan necropolis, the vast cemetery of an unknown people.

From Corneto to Montalto the inexorable desert continues as before. Only here it changes name, and is called Maremma. It is no longer the Campagna, but the country is not less gloomy, nor its history less tragic.

Beyond Montalto it is still the Maremma; beyond Orbetello, Talmone, Grosseto and still onwards the character of the plain is unchanged, and here, along the curving shore and the uninhabited headlands, as far as the eye

The Roman Campagna

can travel, fever reigns inexorable, despotic, the undisturbed sovereign of the swampy shores and of the marshy land!

These Consular roads which were once busy highways are now abandoned to a spectral silence. The only analogy between old times and the present day is that tombs still line the wayside, but even these demonstrate the greatness of the change, for instead of the sumptuous monuments of the Roman Empire we have small heaps of stones with rude wooden crosses planted in the ground, marking the last resting-places of poor workers, victims of the scorching sun or of the pernicious air. These are called "Morre," and among the nomad labourers a custom has been preserved from prehistoric days. Each passer-by bares his head and throws a stone upon the diminutive pyramid which marks the grave of some humble son of the soil.

They throw their stone, cross themselves, and proceed on their sad, solitary journey, these last survivors of the nomad tribes who erected altars of earth and slept in the open, around the camp-fire.

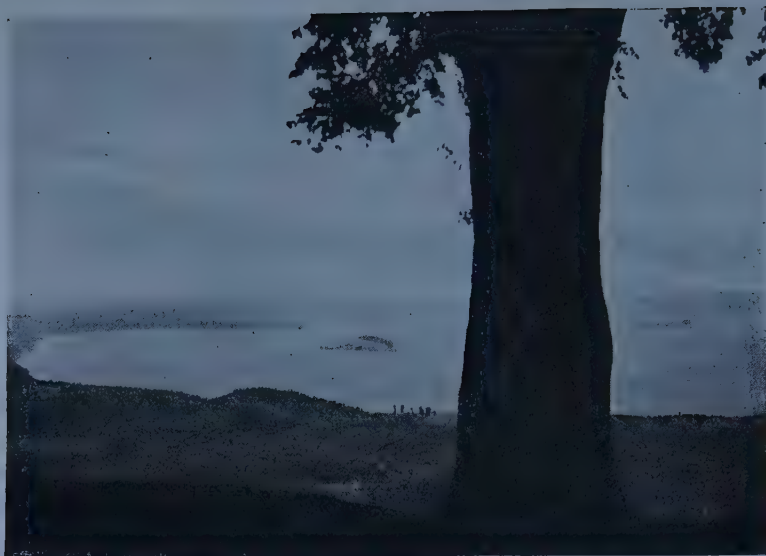
They go on their way along these roads of which they are the real owners, these roads built by the Consuls and Censors to be the arteries of the city's immense heart, which may now be likened to the parched veins of civilisation, dumb witnesses of Nature's retaliation. Are the crumbling mausoleums, partly destroyed by storms and tempests, greater in the sight of impassive Nature than these humble stones thrown by the wanderers of the Campagna on the "morre" of some unknown fellow-mortal who has returned to the bosom of Mother Earth?



THE LAKE OF NINFA.



LAKE AND VILLAGE OF NEMI.



LAKE OF BOLSENA.



LAKE AND CASTLE OF BRACCIANO.



TREVIGNANO, ON LAKE BRACCIANO.



ANGUILLARA, ON LAKE BRACCIANO.



O. Carlandi.

EMISSARY OF THE LAKE OF CASTEL GANDOLFO.



LAKE OF CASTEL GANDOLFO AND THE WALL OF PALAZZOLO.

CHAPTER III

LAKES AND SWAMPS

IF the silent roads of the Campagna may be compared to parched veins, her lakes, surrounded by low hills, can be likened to deep blue eyes in which the setting sun mirrors itself ere it sinks slowly in the glorious west. They lie in cup-like hollows, for all the lakes of the Roman Campagna (with the exception of those in the Pontine Marshes, which are of maritime origin) are in craters of extinct volcanoes.

Along the cool banks of these lakes and further afield, where the waters of underground springs have irrigated the parched land, grow shady trees and luxuriant vegetation, which are hailed with joy after the interminable dreariness of the arid, scorched plain.

The largest and most northerly lake in the province of Rome is Lake Bolsena, which lies in a hollow of the Volsinian volcanic group of mountains. It is nine miles long and six wide, and it is surrounded by basaltic hills; its waters for the greater part are shallow, overgrown with waving reeds, the haunt of numerous water-fowl.

Two tiny, picturesque rocky islands, inhabited by fishermen, are the only breaks in the long, deep-blue stretch of water.

To the south of Viterbo is the small lake of Vico,

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another of those shallow reservoirs where water has taken the place of lava. Its banks are covered with thick vegetation.

The next in size, after Bolsena, is the lake of Bracciano, which is nearly circular and lies in the largest crater of the Sabatini Hills. Some of its waters are brought to Rome by the Paolo Aqueduct, a restoration of the Aqueduct of Trajan. On the surrounding hills there are fine forests, and the shores are dotted with pretty villages—Vicarello, Trevignano, Anguillara; below these two latter the waters have formed small bays. The town of Bracciano, which gives its name to the lake, is finely situated on an eminence and is dominated by the castle built on a rock which projects over the lake. It was erected by the Orsini in the fifteenth century in the form of a pentagon, with unequal sides; that facing the town, the longest side, is flanked by two lofty towers united by a wall. Three other towers face the lake, and the whole is surrounded by a strong wall with lofty turrets.

From the small square windows the eye ranges far beyond the fertile shores over bare, mournful slopes and the deserted plain.

There are three other small lakes in this neighbourhood, those of Mezzana, Leprignano, and Monterosi.

The lakes of Albano and Nemi, blue seals closing for ever the orifice of dead volcanoes, lie to the south of Rome, in the fertile regions of the Alban Hills, where the lava slopes are now covered with laurels, olives, and far-reaching vineyards.

The lake of Albano is larger, bluer, and more sunny than her sister of Nemi, the latter being overshadowed by the spreading trees to which she owes her name—"Lake of the Wood" (*lacus nemoris*).



LAKE NEMI.

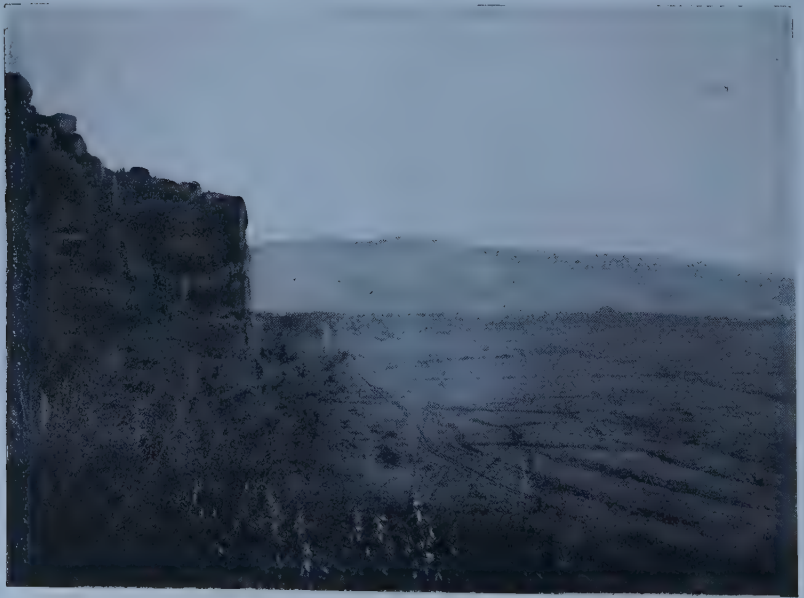


G. A. Sartorio.

ON THE SHORES OF LAKE NEMI.



LAKE OF NINFA.



LAND REDEEMED FROM THE LAKE OF GABINO.

Lakes and Swamps

The classic umbrella pine, the silver-leaved olive, and the twining vine clothe the low hills round the lakes, and the maidenhair, the wild strawberry, the lily, and the rose thrive under their fostering shade, serving as a fitting frame to enhance the beauty of the silent waters.

Beneath the waters of Nemi, Caligula's trireme lies, and divers from time to time bring to light the bronze head of a wolf, or a hyena, or the face of a Medusa wreathed with serpents. Could these waters but speak, what a dark tale they would tell regarding the temple dedicated to the goddess Diana, which stood in the overshadowing woods on their banks!

Strabo writes: "The temple of Diana, called also 'Nemus,' is passed on the left of the road which ascends to the temple of the Aricina. It is said to be of Tauric origin, as a barbarous Scythian custom prevails there, whereby the priesthood falls to whosoever kills with his own hand the priest in charge. The murderer lives prepared for self-defence and ever on the watch for the stealthy approach of his would-be successor."

The custom described by Strabo was still in force in the time of Pausanias under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. Pausanias adds a few more particulars from which we learn that it was runaway slaves who contested the priesthood, and that they bore the title both of Priest and King of the Woods. This ferocious custom came to an end in the reign of Theodosius, when pagan worship was suppressed and all its rites abolished.

No outlet to the lake is visible, for the water escapes by an underground emissarium, but the springs that feed it can be seen and amongst them is one called Egeria.

The ancient lake of Gabino (perhaps Regillus), which lay between Frascati and Tivoli, was drained by the

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Borghese by means of a canal to the River Osa, whereby they acquired one of the most fertile stretches of land in the Campagna.

The lake of Ninfa lies at the beginning of the Pontine Marshes to the south of Rome. The clear waters of the stream that feed it spring from a rugged rock on whose summit stands Norma. A high, square, mediæval tower is reflected in the lake, and is the most striking ruin remaining of a city that lived twice but now lies partially buried.

Along the shore of the Mediterranean is a series of lakes and ponds, usually oval, originally maritime lagoons. To the north are the lakes of Maccarese and Trajan, and the pond of Porto, all most romantic and insalubrious, lying within sight of a noble pine forest and rendered even more picturesque by the rugged ruins on their shores. These sheets of water occupy an area of five thousand acres, of which one-fifth is constantly under water, while the rest is only submerged in the rainy season.

Along the shore that skirts the Pontine Marshes, the lakes of Fogliano, Paolo, Monaci, and Caprolace form vast lagoons, fed by ditches and connected with one another and with the sea by canals. They are long, narrow, shallow reservoirs, stretching for eighteen miles along the coast, between wild swampy land on the one side and the blue sea on the other. They are sheets of blackish water, overgrown by reeds and covered with pestiferous vegetation, and they extend through the most mysterious region of Italy, perhaps of Europe. They form the limit of the Marshes, and on their other side are the healthy, yellow dunes of the sea.

The Campagna extends from the limpid lake of Bolsena, on the borders of a country once inhabited by the



E. Serra.

A PONTINE MARSH.



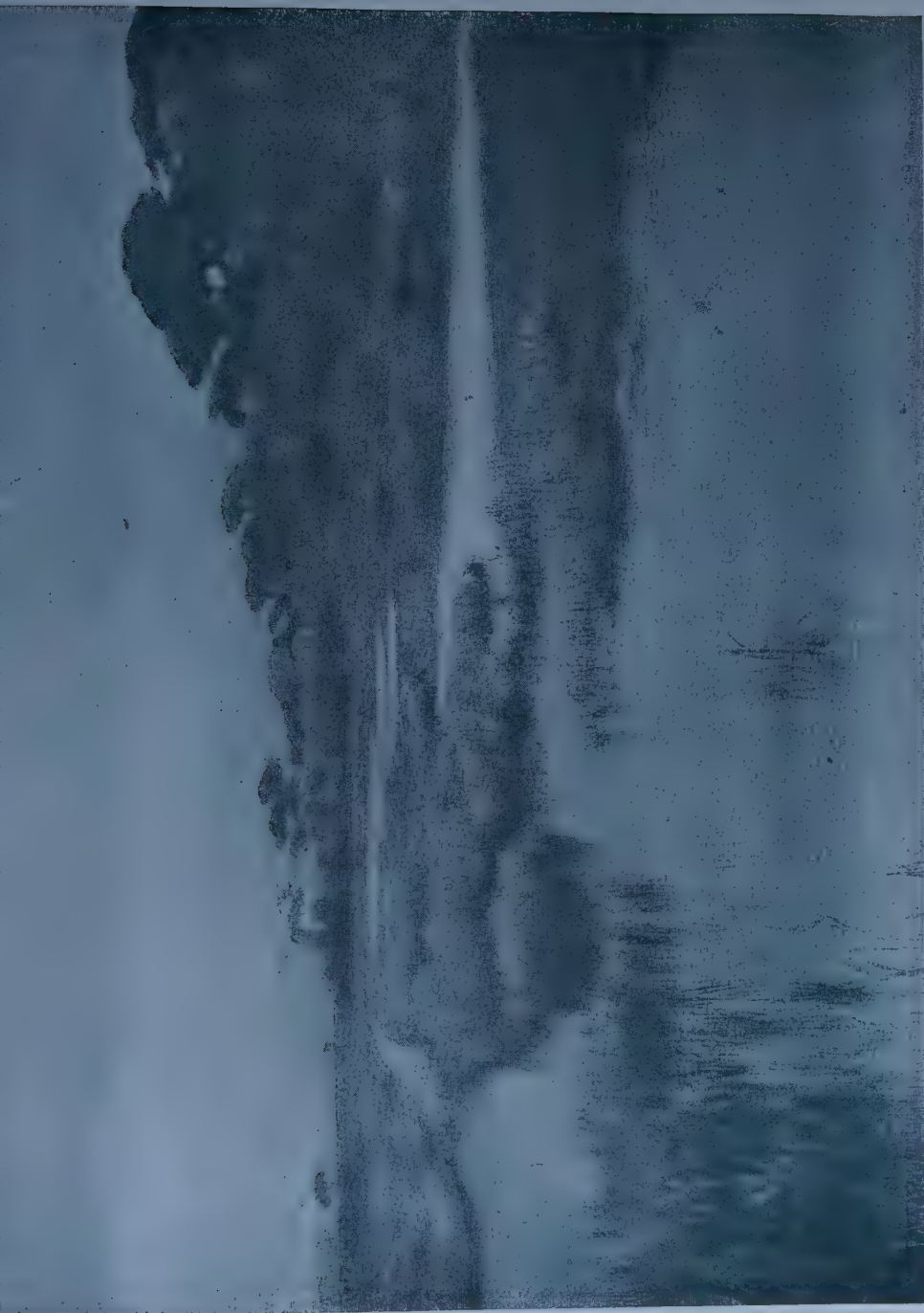
LAKE OF NINFA WITH THE VILLAGE OF NORMA ON THE HEIGHT.



LAKE OF LEPRIGNANO.



CASTIGLIONE.



POND TO THE EAST OF OSTIA.

G. A. Sartorio.



THE ACROPOLIS OF VEII—ISOLA FARNESE.

Lakes and Swamps

industrious, subtle Etruscans, of whom traces continually come to light, to the lake of Paolo, whose dark waters are overshadowed by the mountain of Circe, and where remains of the life and the art of the Greeks are still visible. These two lakes form the natural boundaries of the Campagna.

With the exception of the fertile lake-shores and olive-crowned heights, it is but a desert where, in a few regions, solitary workers still toil, following the traditions of those who have preceded them.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE IN THE "DOMUS CULTÆ"

THE "domus cultæ," the farms in the Agro, were founded in the early Middle Ages; they were scattered here and there in every part of the plain, in the midst of a solitude rendered desolate by barbaric devastations. These farmsteads, which numbered about twenty in all, were built many miles apart and with almost no intercommunication.

These oases, in which all the life of the Roman Agro once centred, still exist, and the sight of one of them is hailed with joy by the wayfarer. He knows that after his long, solitary tramp he will at length see a fellow-man who will show him hospitality, be it of a frugal and primitive nature, that he will be provided with bread and fresh water at least, and bidden to rest under the cool leafy shade of the pine or eucalyptus trees, of which there is generally a group near each homestead.

Though a "domus cultæ" is but a large farmstead, it possesses the resources of a village, for besides the bailiff and the peasants, it can usually boast of a blacksmith, a carpenter, a shoemaker, a general shop, and a cook-shop, for the bare desert around, which provides nothing for their comfort, has taught the inhabitants to depend upon themselves. Generally, the permanent population numbers some thirty souls.



CERVELLETTA.



M. Barricelli.

HAYSTACKS.



ARDEA.



RUINS OF GALERIA.

Life in the “Domus Cultæ”

Around several of the “domus cultæ” there are still traces of the walls and fortifications built for defence against the sudden raids of the barons from Rome, of the pirates from the sea, and of the hordes of Barbarians who descended from the mountains. Some of the towers are also standing from which the alarm bell was rung to recall the breathless workers from the field when the enemy was sighted, for they knew all too well that there was no help forthcoming from any neighbour, and that they could rely on their own strength and courage alone to save their homes and cattle. For this reason many of the farms were built in strong strategic positions.

One of the most noteworthy of these “domus cultæ” is Santa Maria di Galeria, to the north of Rome, on the Via Claudia (two-thirds of the distance between Rome and Bracciano). It is situated in the centre of an immense, reddish plain which slopes down gradually on all sides. The farm was built towards the end of the eighth century, on a spot which had already been inhabited by one of the ancient Roman tribes, the “Galeria.” It stood on a square hill, three sides of which rose vertically above the River Arrone and was only accessible by a narrow strip of land, a situation that rendered it almost impregnable.

In the tenth century it was governed by imperial barons, later the Normans sacked it and for a time it belonged to the Monastery of S. Saba. The powerful Orsini seized it in their turn, and then the Colonna. It ranked at all times as one of the most powerful strongholds, and had to furnish twenty armed men in time of war. Its importance is demonstrated by the fact that Charles V. stayed there for one night on his way from Rome.

The Roman Campagna

Towards the end of the seventeenth century it ceased to be fortified, and gradually, where for centuries families of armed peasants divided their time between work and war, Nature resumed her sway, and desolation superseded the confusion of human strife.

When Nibby visited it many ruins were standing of which but faint traces are left to-day. The church and the remains of a house in a good state of preservation were then to be seen on the road which descends to the bridge between steep cliffs covered with shrubs and grass. The writer goes on to say: "The spot where the bridge spans the Arrone is most picturesque, for the river follows the western side of the precipitous rock on which the castle rises, forming here a small waterfall the splashing of whose waters alone breaks the silence of this solitary spot.

"No sooner is the bridge crossed than the road turns to the left to a gate on which there is still a coat of arms of the Orsini family; passing through this gate it continues to ascend, and bending to the right passes through another gate, and finally through a third one into the fortress, which can only be reached, and that with difficulty, from this northern side.

"The village is built on a rock of volcanic tufa rectangular in shape, with the four perpendicular sides facing the four cardinal points. The wall which encloses it belongs to two different epochs: the lower part, which is the oldest, dates from the eleventh century and is of small square blocks of local tufa, while the upper part, which is far more irregular, was built in the fifteenth century. The houses are mostly in the Saracenic style of the thirteenth century, and appear to have been rebuilt at a later period. Some have Gothic windows, which



RUINS OF THE CHURCH AT GALERIA.



RUINS OF THE CASTLE OF GALERIA.



MODERN GALERIA.



STEWARDS AND "BUTTERI" AT GALERIA.



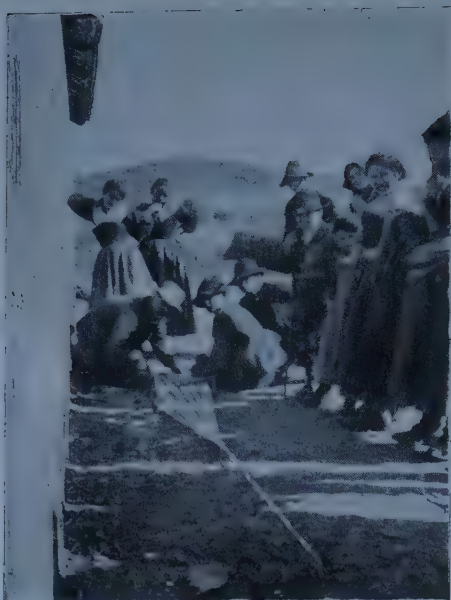
CART ON THE VIA CLAUDIA.



ISOLA FARNESE.



S. VITTORINO.



GROUP OF PEASANTS.



PERMANENT WORKERS' AT PANTANO.



PEASANTS IN HOLIDAY DRESS.

Life in the “Domus Cultæ”

leads one to imagine that they were restored in the beginning of last century. They are all gradually crumbling away, and soon there will remain but few vestiges overgrown by grass, the abode of reptiles.

“The piazza is near the western corner of the rock, and there stands the church, portions of which, clearly belonging to the fifth century, go to show that this rock was inhabited even at that early date. This we may easily believe, for such a strong position would inevitably attract the attention of primitive tribes, and it may even have been one of the fortified castles of the Vejentes. Some large square stones in the wall of a house in the last street going westwards confirm this supposition. On either side of the door of the modern church are two marble funeral altars brought perhaps from the Via Claudia.”

But now all that remains are a few pieces of wall, part of the campanile, and a heap of ruins representing the church. The whole is little by little being smothered by weeds and ivy, which grow in almost tropical luxuriance, forming a great contrast to the arid plain beneath, and this once imposing fortress has become the den of wolves and foxes.

When there was no longer danger of war and rapine the few remaining families abandoned the top of the hill and settled at the foot of it. In the seventeenth century, at the time when an effort was being made to revive agriculture in the Campagna, a “domus culta” was built there. It was large and well planned, a typical example of many such settlements; but if the building was more modern, no change was made in the ancient customs; the manner in which the various farm operations were carried out remained the same as in the time of the earliest Latin and Faliscian communities. In fact, the life of the country people has altered but little even up to our time. In the “domus

The Roman Campagna

culta" of to-day, as thirty centuries ago, the reaper places the last cut sheaf with the ears turned to the east.

Agriculture has always played an important part in the history of Italy. As far back as the days when the Romans sacked Carthage, the Senate gave orders that the works of Mago on agriculture should be saved from the general wreck, the only books so honoured. From remotest times the region of Lucania was celebrated for its wrought iron, scythes, and spades, and for its cartwrights, while in Campania, oil-presses, jars, and ploughs were manufactured; Rome made casks, amphoras and wine-jars, and, as a great Italian writer observed, showed her appreciation of the importance of agriculture by nominating agrarian censors among the earliest magistrates.

In the late republican era and in the Augustan age, the treatment of slaves working in the Campagna was regulated by law, and careful rules were laid down for the protection of their health. As a precaution against chills they were provided with woollen clothing in summer as well as in winter, and the distribution of food, according to Gregorovius, was carried out in an equally rational manner; the slaves and the overseers received rations as well as clothes from the master at fixed dates, they being bound to keep the latter in good condition. To each was given a certain quantity of corn, which he had to grind for himself, salt, olives, dried fish, wine and oil. The quantity of food was regulated in conformity to the nature of the work, so much so, that the overseer, who worked less than a labourer, received smaller rations.

Besides the farms, on the tops of the hills close to the rivers and Consular roads, in Cato's time there rose many of those small dwellings which Varro called "the workshops of the agricultural consuls and of the Roman legionaries."



OPEN-AIR THRESHING-FLOOR WITH TRAVELLING THRESHING-MACHINE.



WEEDING : "GUITTI" AT WORK.



WEEDING : WOMEN WORKERS.



PLOUGHING.

Life in the “Domus Cultæ”

These were the largest and best-built houses in the country districts. They were of more than one story, with a doorway in the centre, near which a peasant mounted guard; the windows had bars, and as a rule faced south; the roofs projected somewhat to protect the ears of corn which were hung on the walls to dry; the circular threshing-floor, usually near the house, was made of clay, with openings on every side.

On entering the house the first thing to catch the eye was a broad hearth, above which, well smoked, stood the wooden statues of the domestic gods, which the peasant's wife wreathed with flowers at the “Ides” and “Nonæ,” and close by, some sacrificial terra-cotta vases. In the centre of the room stood the wooden table with dishes of wood or earthenware; slaves and masters took their meals together, the only difference between them was that the latter had more comfortable stools. Their food consisted of the equivalent to our hominy, barley-cakes, and other country delicacies. They also used smoked hams, turnips, and other vegetables. Sometimes flasks of wine were set on a separate table; only the masters drank pure wine, the slaves, except on days of specially hard work, being given it much diluted, with which, so history says, they were not always well pleased. Above the kitchen were the dormitories of the workers, who slept on beds stretched on leather thongs. Often, besides the peasants' rooms, there were others where the fruit was stored to ripen. The walls of the houses were built of mortar and cement with pillars of rough, unplastered stones.

The fields were cultivated by free men or by slaves, or by both. If the free man was the owner, or if he rented the land, he hired assistants, as is still the custom in time of pressure such as harvest-time. These hired servants were

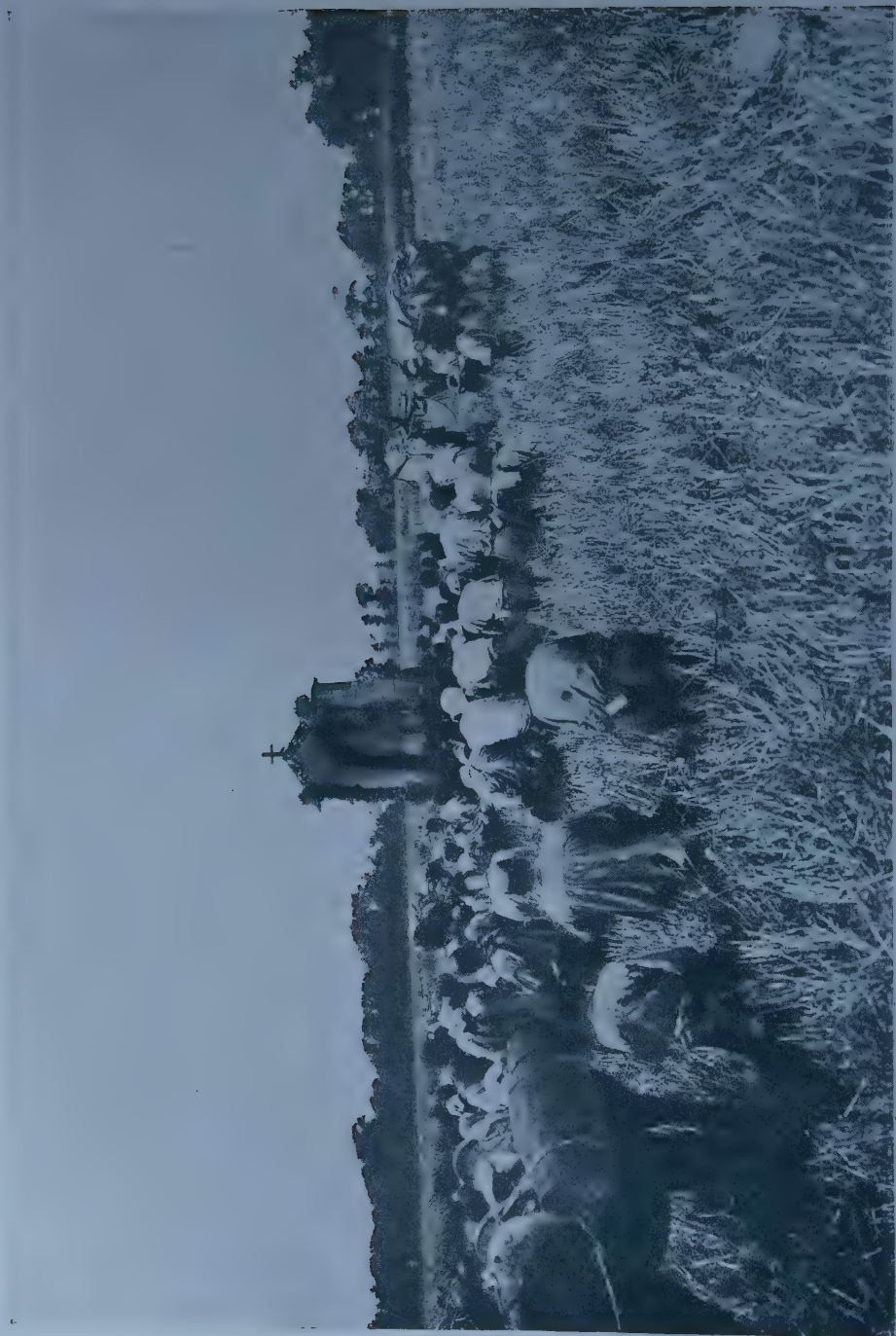
The Roman Campagna

never under the age of twenty-two; they were sober and vigorous, dressed in summer in a short tunic, and in winter in a mantle with a hood which covered the neck and head, like a monk's cowl.

The rustic priests, such as the Arvali Brothers of Rome and the "Magistri Vicorum" of all Italy, are mentioned by many writers and in several epigraphs. They were the rural parish priests who offered sacrifices to the gods of their villages, blessed the threshing-floors, presided at weddings, funerals, and vintage festivities, and those solemn village feasts called "Paganalia," which are supposed to have been instituted by Servius Tullius in connection with the taking of the census of the tribes. These feasts were sacred to the Lares. An eyewitness narrates that, during the time that the feast lasted, it was the custom to set up in the enclosures a certain number of sacks stuffed with wool which represented the free men, and a certain number of poles to represent the slaves, in order that the greedy gods of Death should content themselves with the dead and leave the living alone. "On the sacred day," sings an ancient poet, "let the earth rest, let the ploughman rest, let his oxen, wreathed with flowers, remain by their mangers full of fodder." The peasants bearing olive branches followed the sacred lamb to the altar, drawing auguries from its movements, and the master, after immolating the victim, prayed to the god to avert evil from the field, the house, the family, and the cattle. After the sacrifice, all returned to their respective homes, where the most sumptuous supper of the year awaited them. In honour of the "Palilæ," another of their festivals, the shepherds washed the stables with water, sulphur, and sacred herbs, offering up gifts to the goddess Pales, and after feasting together they lighted great bonfires on the tops of the hills. The names are changed, but customs



TRAMPLING OUT THE CORN WITH HORSES.



MASS FOR THE REAPERS.



"GUITTI."



PEASANT WOMEN AT GALERIA.



NOMAD WORKERS IN A HOUSE AT GALERIA.

Life in the “Domus Cultæ”

and rites have survived and remain the same as in the more prosperous days of the Campagna; the pagan gods and goddesses have, however, given place to the saints of Christianity.

A “tenuta”—the name given to-day to a “domus culta”—is generally surrounded by wooden fences, or more rarely by low, dry-stone walls, or sometimes by a hedge. It consists of a farm-house, outhouses, storerooms, and a fountain. Close to the farm-house there is usually a small graveyard, with two cypresses at the entrance that rise into the blue sky like two giant sentinels guarding the humble graves. The work of the estate is divided into three sections: the cultivation of the arable land, the breeding of horses and cattle (called the “Procoio”), and sheep breeding (the “Masseria”), a division that has come down from biblical times.

As the fixed population is not sufficient for the work, there being rarely more than a dozen hands on a farm, numerous bands of nomadic labourers, known under the name of “guitti,” are hired. Work on every farm proceeds in the following manner: operations start in the late autumn with the weeding done by the despised “guitti”; it consists in the removing of stones and the uprooting of weeds and shrubs which tend to choke the crops; and this work continues from December to March. The refuse is generally burnt, but on those estates where wood is scarce it is used as fuel.

When the soil is light and sandy it is broken up with a plough, but when on the contrary it is hard clay, or overgrown with weeds, on account of its having lain fallow for a time, a kind of hoe (known among the workers as “peticara”) is used. Often the soil is broken up first with the “peticara” and then ploughed. In order to keep the

The Roman Campagna

furrows straight, the ploughman makes use of some distant peak as a guiding point.

When this work is finished, the seed is scattered broadcast by special boys, usually drawn from the band of nomad workers who come down from the mountains in the autumn to till the land. "It is a grand sight," writes one of the actual workers, "to watch an army of labourers at work: the men of Aquila silently ply the spade or hoe, while the 'guitti' shout gay refrains until they are hoarse, and the silvery laughter of the girls rings out at some racy sally of the men; the monotonous 'fora-foo' of the boy who frightens away the ever-greedy crow is interrupted by the sharp orders shouted out by the overseer as he rides through this busy throng, ever active and watchful."

Men follow the sowers, beating down the furrows and covering the seed with earth. When the young corn has reached a certain height, the soil around the tender shoot is turned over and the weeds destroyed by women who work in rows, singing praises to the Madonna in a slow chant, keeping time with the regular movement of their short hoe.

The overseer gives orders at nine for work to cease for breakfast, and dinner is at two, an hour and three-quarters being allowed for each meal and a rest.

The ploughs work in a company of nine, called a "chain," and as soon as their share of the work is completed another plough makes deeper furrows transversely to allow the rain-water to run off and to form a track for the heavy ox wagons. When the hour to cease work arrives, the patient oxen are unyoked, and all wend their way home to the farm-house or to the village of huts; those who still have some energy left stop to gather wild horse-radish and endive to make into the soup which among themselves they



HUTS AND SHELTERS FOR REAPERS.



TENTS OF NOMAD WORKERS NEAR THE VIA TIBURTINA.



MASS IN THE FIELD.



CARTING STRAW.

Life in the “Domus Cultæ”

call “cooked water”; others hurry to take possession of the fire and hastily place their pots on it, from which the smoking soup will soon be portioned out. As the fire-places are not large enough for all, quarrels and scuffles often ensue in the struggle to gain possession.

When night falls, they sit in a circle around the fire telling wondrous tales of witches and sorcerers till one by one they retire to the beds placed against the walls in the general living-room. The beds consist of two tressels, on which are placed boards and a straw mattress. Some have a blanket, but more often their only covering is a “rag of a cloak,” which serves both as a blanket and sheet. The youths not infrequently fall in love with the girls who work with them in the fields, and when supper is over they take their concertina and go out to serenade their sweethearts.

Besides the “guitti,” who might be called semi-permanent, as they remain all the winter and spring on the farm and on whom the overseer and the steward always keep a sharp look-out, compelling them to work from morning to night in all weathers, there are large bands of nomadic workers, who come for the hay-making and the harvest. They by far outnumber the others, being nearly ten to one, and the latest figures in the district of Guido show that to the 273 permanent workers there are some 2,011 nomadic workers.

Haymaking begins in earnest in May, but before beginning to cut, the meadows are cleared of all stones, twigs and tangled weeds which might damage the scythes. Then the mowers begin their work, which goes on all day and through all weathers. They are a sober lot of men, living on bread and onions washed down with water to which a few drops of vinegar have been added. The hay is left lying on the ground till it has attained a leaden

The Roman Campagna

shade, then the "guitti" heap it up in large wicker baskets, where it is left for at least a week, with twists of hay placed across the top to prevent it from blowing away. When it is quite dry the overseer chooses a suitable spot for building the stacks, which are quite a characteristic feature of the Campagna and of an entirely different shape to those of other countries. To begin with, a long straight pole, preferably of chestnut, known as the "soul," is planted solidly in the ground. Three drovers, with two oxen each, drag the hay up to it, and it is piled around the "soul," while a workman stands on the top to give a rounded shape to the stack. It is not made very high, and when it is finished it is fenced in. Great care is taken that the hay is not in the least damp, and to avoid this danger it is not stacked until the dew on it is quite dry.

"Cutters," as they are commonly called, come down from the hills into the Campagna in July in companies of over a hundred and remain there until harvest is finished, some three weeks or so. They are of a different race from the peasants of the Campagna, and they do not mix much with them.

The permanent inhabitants of the Campagna differ in type among themselves, according to whether they come originally from the Marche, from the neighbourhood of Rome, or from the outlying districts, and though they number not more than a thousand all told, they use a language which is a hybrid production, being a Romanesque dialect with an admixture of Abruzzese words, well known to all sportsmen, and which Augusto Sindici has made use of in his "*Leggende della Campagna Romana*." The word "buttero," which is a corruption of "boum-ductor"—leader of cattle, the cattle being under his charge—is one of the best-known words of this dialect.



CARTING STRAW.



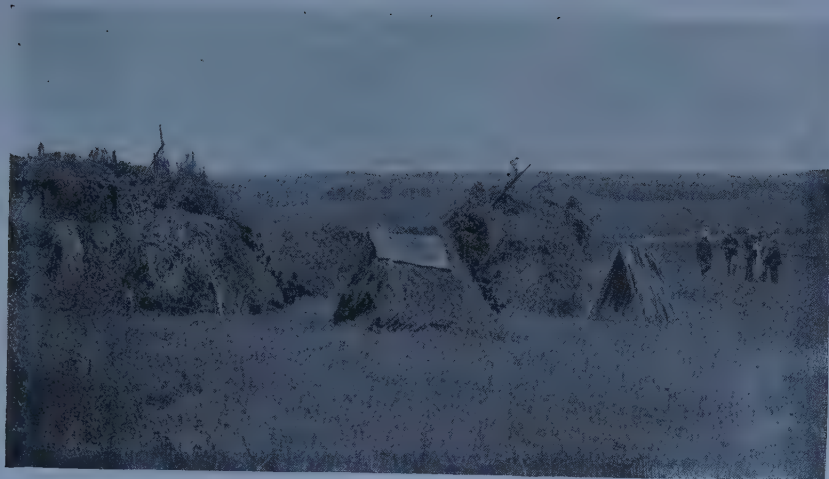
ENCAMPMENT OF A COMPANY OF REAPERS NEAR VIA CLAUDIA.



REAPERS HUTS.



SPADEMAN.



REAPERS' HUTS.



RED CROSS AMBULANCE AT GALERIA.



CASTEL GIUBILEO.



FARM OF S. ANTONIO.

Life in the “Domus Cultæ”

The nomadic workers who come to the Campagna for a short time differ greatly in type and language according to the district from which they come. They generally belong to families which for generations have taken part in this periodic migration to the plain. In the remote villages among the mountains they are enrolled by “caporali,” who call them together with the sound of drum and fife, like the recruiting sergeants in olden times. As they are drawn from districts wide apart, no general description can be given of them. The “burino,” an old name derived from the Italic word “boros”—mountain—is the peasant who comes from the Monti Lepini, and who is quite different from the “Ciociaro,” a hillman also, but from the Ernician Mountains. The former wear thick leather boots, while the latter wear the “ciocie,” the ancient sandal of the Roman soldier, but with the point turned up like a Chinese shoe. The “burini” still retain various characteristic features and customs of the ancient Volscians.

Foreign writers and poets who love to study the beauties and miseries of the Roman Campagna make a strange confusion of the types. They take at random a “ciociaro” and introduce him as a Roman type, even going so far as to represent Rome allegorically by a “ciociara” girl from Serrone or Anticoli di Montagna. Surely it is time that this confusion should cease, considering the progress that has been made in ethnographical and historical studies.

The main body of these nomad workers come from the Abruzzi, and the best among them are the Aquilani, who are specially good at clearing out ditches and digging water-courses through cornfields; but for sowing the men from Rieti are preferred, and the sower is always dubbed “Rietino,” even if he does not come from Rieti. The name “Ortonese” is given to the worker in the vineyard, whose

The Roman Campagna

tools are the hoe and the spade. He comes from Ortona, in the Abruzzi, and like most of its inhabitants he is intelligent and patient. The "Cammeratano" is a mountaineer of Simbruinic origin, of Italic type; he is reputed to be particularly clever in snaring game, especially with nets. He comes down to the plain merely for this, and as soon as the close season begins he returns to his distant mountain village. Besides these, there are the fishermen, the professional huntsmen and the olive pruners from Umbria and Sabina; all these present such a variety of type and race that it would be an error to consider them as belonging to one family. They keep themselves severely apart from each other in separate colonies, and you will never find people from the Marche associating with those from Aquila, nor the natives from one village mixing with those of another. Most of these "guitti" live huddled up in miserable huts or in caverns unless—a rare occurrence—the farmstead be a large one, with sufficient outhouses and sheds to provide some kind of a decent shelter for the workmen; the beds in any case are never more than raised deal boards, on which are thrown sacks filled with straw. Others sleep out in the open, exposed to all weathers, or under primitive huts made of branches, twigs, and straw, or of strips of canvas, which from a distance remind one of military camps. All is squalor, and the name of "guitti" is a synonym for destitution and dependence. They are the victims of the storekeeper, who is also the landlord of the tavern, for there is no other place where they can purchase provisions during the two or three weeks they remain at work, the stores, like the farm-houses, being separated from each other by long distances. The poor "guitti" can spend his Sundays nowhere but in the tavern, sitting at the round, rough tables, drinking, talking, or playing



TORRE NUOVA.



ENTRANCE TO MARCIGLIANA.



MARCO SIMONE.



FARM OF MARCIGLIANA.



FARM OF SCROFANO.



CAMPO MORTO.



CARANO.

Life in the "Domus Cultæ"

"mora," a game so exciting that it often ends in bloodshed, and which is now prohibited in cities.

The pale-faced host who moves quickly amongst them always ready to supply a fresh "fiasco" of wine, assumes an air of tyrannical authority over these bronze-faced workers; he discards the mask of merry good-fellowship worn by his town colleagues, he feels himself master in the full sense of the word, for he knows he can oblige his customers to drink his wine, bad as it is, or go without, and as storekeeper he knows also that he can sell damaged goods to these poor unfortunate "guitti," goods that have been discarded by city bakers and grocers. Not only do the great distances give them the monopoly, but the "caporali" and land-owners, when they hire the men, put a clause in the contract obliging the workers to make their purchases exclusively at the local store.

If on Sunday afternoons the poor "guitti" does sometimes try to drown his sorrows in the very indifferent wine meted out to him by the grasping host, he never fails to go to Mass in the morning, if possible, for he is always most fervent in his religious duties. It is one of the most impressive sights of the Campagna, the celebration of Mass in the open air, usually on the threshing-floor. As there is no church or chapel within reasonable distance, an altar is fitted up inside what might be termed an altar cart, drawn by horses or oxen, which a priest and acolyte accompany. When the spot is selected for the service to be held, the horses or oxen are unharnessed, the two doors which enclose the altar are opened, and Mass is then said before this primitive white altar in the presence of a crowd of kneeling peasants surrounded by silent Nature, in the wide, open country.

All work relating to corn and cereals, such as reaping

The Roman Campagna

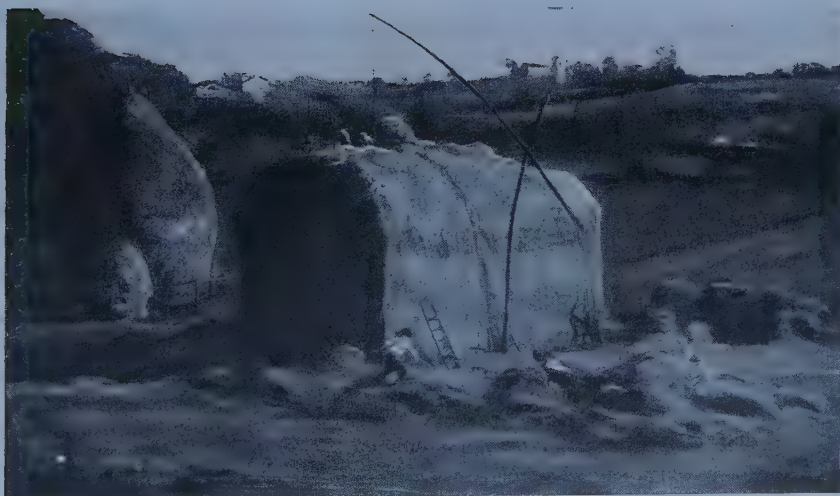
carrying of sheaves to the threshing-floor, or carting the sacks of corn to the granaries, falls to the lot of the "guitti," and when threshing is going on all is bustle and noise. It is done in the open, and usually a travelling threshing-machine is employed, though in some wild spots the primitive mode is still in use of driving three or four horses in a circle over the sheaves until the grain is all trampled out of the husk. The threshing-machine is hired, and for that reason extra pressure is put upon the workers, as it is always wanted elsewhere, and no sooner is it in place and properly "oriented," that is to say, turned to the east, than all is bustle and haste, the sheaves are carted to it, thrown into its voracious mouth, reappearing quickly as grain, straw, and chaff.

During harvest-time work begins very early in the morning. At daybreak the second steward wakens the workers and hurries them out into the fields; there the head reaper cuts a way through the corn, while he is closely followed by the others, who walk in single file. When he has cut a handful of corn, he makes a band, which he lays on the ground; the man who comes next heaps armfuls of corn upon it, while the third, gathering up the ends of the band, twists them together round the corn, making the sheaf. The sheaf-makers set up the sheaves in rows at regular intervals, forming the "casole." A "casola" is composed of three rows of standing sheaves, the last of which, according to tradition, is turned with the ears to the east. While this work is proceeding, the overseers ride among the workers shouting stern orders and urging on any who may be flagging.

The reapers have four meals a day. If the work is at a considerable distance from the farm, they do not return for the midday repast, but in the evening the meal is always



REAPERS.



M. Barricelli.

STRAW- AND HAYSTACKS.



PLOUGHING.



"BUTTERI" WITH HORSE IN AN ENCLOSURE.



E. Coleman.

THE HERD.



WILD HORSES PASTURING NEAR THE AQUEDUCT OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS.



MOTHER AND FOAL.



BUFFALO.

Life in the “Domus Cultæ”

eaten in hut or tent. The rations for the day consist of four pounds of bread, about three ounces of bacon, and two quarts of wine, well watered.

Until a few years ago, all those who worked in the solitary waste were subject to frequent attacks of malaria, the terrible goddess Fever, who remained unpropitiated by all the altars erected and the sacrifices offered to her since before the days of Romulus. So sudden and acute were the attacks, that many were struck down as by sun-stroke, and being unaided by any doctor or nurse, they quickly died. Even the strongest rarely survived more than a few days, and were laid to rest before those close by had realised that they were ill.

When the “nomad” population has taken its departure, solitude once more closes round the permanent inhabitants, who look longingly at the lonely Consular roads, the paths that lead to the delights and pleasures of the great city across the deserted plain, where a raven or a hawk sometimes throws a passing shadow. Beyond the boundaries of the farm and the vista of the uneven plain stands the sacred city, filled with treasures to be gaped at in awe-struck admiration when occasion comes for a rare visit. So these “domus cultæ,” with their mediæval towers, lie like outposts in the solitary Campagna, where for miles and miles, as far as the eye can reach, not a house, not a hostelry, not a fountain, not a human face is to be seen.

Besides S. Maria di Galeria, of which we have already spoken, other oases are to be found in the great desert, such as the Etruscan Isola Farnese, built on the slope above ancient Veii, the ally of Fidene and Capena, which fought in vain against the irresistible city. In the Middle Ages Isola Farnese belonged to the Farnese, Borgia, and Orsini families in turn.

The Roman Campagna

Marcigliana, another of these oases, stands on a hill, from whence commanded the upper Tiber valley from the days when it was held by Marcellus all through the dark ages when it belonged to the monastery of Farfa; and Torre Nuova on the Via Casilina is massive and imposing, both as regards its ancient fortress and the seventeenth-century building alongside it. Others of some importance are Castelnovo di Porto, with round turrets and an elegiac cemetery; the house of Marco Simone, with its large tower still intact, proudly vigilant; Scofano, rich in flocks, close to the Sabine country; Castel di Guidi, the ancient "Lorium," whose quiet and solitary shore was beloved by Marcus Aurelius, where an early Christian community lived and died in oblivion, and where Guido of Tuscany, the husband of the famous Marozia, founded the order of the Wandering Knights about the year 1000.

On a bare hill is Cervelletta, a cluster of buildings around an old tower.

Castiglione, in sight of ancient Gabi, lies close to the now drained Lake of Regillus, famous in remote ages, and which saw the passing of the armies of Cola di Rienzo, the last of the Tribunes, while Castel Giubileo stands high above the Tiber.

Below Ardea and Cisterna is Carano, in one of the wildest parts of the country.

Campo Morto lies to the extreme south, where the Agro merges into the Pontine Marshes; an immense estate, as deadly as its name. At the end of the fifteenth century it was the graveyard of the vanquished soldiers of the Duke of Calabria; this spot, like Conca, was a sanctuary for criminals from the Roman States.

Laurentium, now called Tor Paterno, lies between Ostia and Anzio, and was one of the most ancient Italic towns,



WILD HORSES AT MACCARESE.



A LARGE HERD.



HORSES ON THE CAMPAGNA.

Life in the “ Domus Cultæ ”

founded by the Aborigines in prehistoric times; Laurentium which had already been ruled by three kings before the fleet of the Phrygians, after the fall of Troy, dropped anchor on her shores and where Æneas of the bronze armour landed. Now it is but a dismantled tower standing between wild sea and wild plain.

Thus these nearly unknown farmsteads lie under the shining stars, under the scorching rays of the sun, while the north winds whistle across the plain through the cold winter months, miles apart from one another, ignored and unknown.

From the shore to the Apennines stretches the wide plain, the cradle and tomb of many peoples, like a great sea where the farmsteads are islands in which man learns to love the companionship of his fellow-man, feeling the necessity of union with him in face of Nature's awful implacability.

CHAPTER V

HORSES AND BUFFALOES

THE Campagna, like most great plains, such as the Pampas, the Steppes, and the Prairies of the West, is a famous breeding-ground for horses. It has, therefore, its "gauchi" and its "cowboys," called respectively "cavallari" and "butteri."

Large herds of horses and oxen are found all over the Campagna, but more especially in the marshy region of Maccarese, which extends along the coast between Rome and Civitavecchia. Here the size of the herds of horses, oxen, and buffaloes probably exceeds that of any others in Europe. The wide marshland is intersected with reed-grown ditches and thickets of brushwood, amongst which the animals roam in absolute freedom, only visited occasionally by their keepers. Herds of bronze-coloured horses, thin and shaggy and wonderfully active, graze quietly on the scanty grass, but like all roamers in the wilds they are ever on the alert for any suspicious intruder. The slightest noise borne to them on the breeze is enough to send the whole mass flying in a wild panic, racing along with their heads in the air and with terror-stricken eyes. Their sensitive ears are inherited from their ancestors, who had constantly to be on the watch for the beast of prey, lurking in the reeds ready to spring on the unwary.



E. Coleman.

BUFFALOES BEING DRIVEN INTO A CANAL.



BUFFALOES ON A ROAD.



BUFFALOES AT MACCARESE.



BUFFALOES IN THE RIVER ARRONE.



BUFFALOES NEAR THE FARM OF MACCARESE.



BUFFALOES IN THE CANALE PIO.



E. Coleman.

BULLS FIGHTING.

Horses and Buffaloes

The buffaloes have their headquarters on the edge of a wonderful unexplored tract of woodland, where they wander seeking for muddy pools wherein to wallow. These herds of dark, savage beasts give to the landscape a strangely tropical aspect; they are somewhat like bisons, and when they are wallowing in ditches or lying half-concealed in the brushwood, their backs might be mistaken for those of hippopotami or young elephants, so pachydermatous are they. They are the remnants of a race that has almost died out even in their native land; last survivors of the herds that accompanied the barbaric tribes in their migrations from the tablelands of Central Asia across the wide steppes to the land of sunshine and blue skies, arriving in the neighbourhood of Rome in the wake of Attila and his Huns.

They have adapted themselves perfectly to the Campagna, perhaps finding in it a likeness to their native plains. In spite of their savageness and wildness, the buffaloes are amenable to the guidance of their herds. "Notwithstanding his uncouth and savage aspect," writes Ercole Metalli, the peasant author, "the buffalo is fairly intelligent; if he discovers a piece of pasture that pleases him he surmounts every obstacle in order to return to it, breaking fences or jumping them and swimming rivers to reach his goal. At Maccarese one of them was in the habit of walking many miles to visit a vegetable garden near the pond between that place and Fiumicino. For," adds our author, "the buffalo is very obstinate." He suffers as much from excessive heat as excessive cold, but the latter is more fatal to him and often kills him.

The manner in which buffalo cows are milked is characteristic. They and their calves are driven into different

The Roman Campagna

enclosures, separated from each other by railings; the buffalo's forelegs are tied together so that she cannot escape, and then her calf is admitted to the pen. It at once runs to its mother and begins to suckle, but as soon as the milk begins to flow it is driven away and the keeper, who is waiting ready with his pail, continues the milking, while another man stands by with a stick and showers blows on the buffalo's back if it turns recalcitrant. It is rather barbarous, but the keepers say it is the only way to obtain any milk. After being milked, the buffalo is turned into a pen where the calves that have been driven away from their mothers are, and as soon as a cow comes in the hungry little buffaloes rush at her to suckle all the milk that remains. The cow thus hustled kicks and butts, but the little ones do not leave her as long as a drop of milk remains. When the milking is over the calves are again separated from their mothers and driven out to different pastures.

Buffaloes are often employed for transport purposes, being yoked to the heavy carts used in the Campagna, which are called "barrozze."

In the Pontine Marshes herds of buffaloes are employed for a work peculiar to the district. In order to provide an outlet for the stagnant waters, canals have been cut, one of the largest of them being the Canale Pio, which runs parallel to the Via Appia for many miles. But a thick growth of aquatic vegetation springs up in these canals, impeding the flow of the slow-moving water and often stopping it altogether. When this happens, herds of buffaloes are driven into the canal, and as the water is shallow they trample down the roots with their hoofs, or, where it is deeper, force a passage through the obstructing vegetation by swimming. Men on horseback, armed with



CART DRAWN BY FOUR BUFFALOES.



HERD OF BUFFALOES AT MACCARESE.



WILD HORSES AT PASTURE.

Horses and Buffaloes

long poles, drive them back if they attempt to escape, while the boatmen, the gondoliers of the Campagna, in their shallow, square-ended punts drive them onwards. This strange process may be seen constantly in any of the canals in the Marshes; the snorting animals splash through the waters, tearing their way through the tangled plants, leaving behind them swathes of uprooted vegetation, and the water once more begins to move slowly towards the sea.

The herds of oxen are even wilder than the buffaloes, and the heifers especially are often very savage after the birth of their first calf. Milking them is a difficult process, and the first step towards it is to accustom them to the sight of a man on foot. When they are out in the open, the only men they see are their mounted herds, who never alight from their horses. After the birth of a calf, the keeper rides up to a heifer and begins stroking her with the long pole he always carries; gradually she grows accustomed to his presence, and when she is so far tamed she is driven into the pen for milking. But she is by no means really tame, and in order to make it possible to milk her a rope is tied round her horns and then passed round her left leg, drawing the head down to one side, a most uncomfortable position that renders her helpless. Every cow has a name, and she is generally called after the cowboy's sweetheart or the prettiest girl in the village, though it is doubtful if the girls feel flattered by this compliment.

In spring all the calves and colts are branded, and this branding is a great ceremony, to which all the neighbours for miles round are invited. The animals are enclosed in pens, and the spectators stand round outside the railings and criticise the workers, jeering at the

The Roman Campagna

awkward ones and rewarding any particularly dexterous move with applause.

Three or four calves are driven into a pen and allowed to gallop round and round till they are tired; then two cowboys pick one out, seize it by the head and the tail, dexterously throw it to the ground and hold it down while a third ties its legs together. The overseer, or sometimes the owner himself, then comes with a hot iron and stamps his initials on the right thigh and left shoulder, and the current year on the right hind-quarter.

The process with a colt is slightly different. A rope is thrown round its neck and a cowboy springs on to its shoulders—an action that calls for great agility—leans over its neck and seizes it by its nostrils, thus bringing it to the ground. Generally only one small mark is put on the cheek of the colt, instead of the three that are put on the calf.

Sometimes the frightened animals rush against the men and knock them down, but serious accidents are rare, and marking time is a cheerful festivity. In old times, on large estates, the guests used to be lavishly entertained during the three or four days that it lasted, and when the animals were all marked the cowboys used to mount the finest bullocks and ride them round the pen, holding out their hats to the spectators, who threw in a piece of silver. Now the occasion is shorn of much of its ceremony, but it is still one of the great festivals of the Campagna.

The horseboys of the Campagna are amongst the most famous in the world, and can break in the horses to a variety of paces.

The normal paces of a horse are the walk, the trot, and the gallop; but on the Campagna they are never



WILD HORSES AT PASTURE.



HERDS OF CATTLE AT MACCARESE.



MARKING THE CALVES.



THE HERD AT THE DRINKING-TROUGH.



MARKING A CALF.



BULL JUST MARKED.



A STEWARD OF THE FLOCKS.



A NEWLY CAUGHT FOAL.

Horses and Buffaloes

allowed to trot, and rarely to gallop. The steps taught them are the "passo," a walk in which the steps are shorter and quicker than in the ordinary walk; the amble, in which the horse moves the legs on one side simultaneously; the counter-step, a movement between a trot and an amble, and the "travalco," in which the hind feet move as if trotting and the fore feet gallop.

The "passo" and the "travalco" are apt to damage the fore legs of the horse if used too frequently, but they are very easy for the rider.

Both the horseboys and the cowboys are strong, well-built men; they wear top-boots and spurs and Calabrian hats, and, in winter, ample cloaks lined with green cloth. They carry long poles, tipped with iron, with which they drive the herds of horses and oxen and open the gates in the fences. They pass the whole day on horseback, riding about the wide country to see that their charges are all right, and moving them from one pasture to another, or driving them to the watering-places. When it is necessary to catch an animal they use a lasso. To the cowboys falls also the duty of taking the milk to Rome in the curiously shaped brass pails, laden on a cart drawn by three horses, one of which the cowboy sometimes rides.

These herds of horses and cattle are to be found all over the Campagna in numbers varying according to the richness of the pasture; but it is at Maccarese, one of the largest estates in the district, that the life of the herd is seen in its wildest form. The uncultivated ground extends for miles round the house, which is an enormous pile, so strong that it resisted several sieges of the Barbarians. Not far from it, close to a tower on the shore, is the site of the ancient Fregenæ, which was one of the

The Roman Campagna

best-known ports on this coast until the building of the harbour of Porto took away its trade and left it deserted. Now all is solitude, and the horses and buffaloes roam in a freedom almost as absolute as that of the prairies and steppes which were their original homes.



HORSE-BOYS.



"BUTTERI" AND HORSE-BOYS AT GALERIA.



MILKING.



HOUSE AT MACCARESE.



"BUTTERI."

CHAPTER VI

SHEEP AND SHEPHERDS

ONLY a small belt of land round the farmsteads is under cultivation. Beyond this zone come the vast pasture-lands allotted to the oxen, buffaloes, and horses, and still further afield are the sheep. These graze in the plain in autumn and winter, and in the spring they are driven slowly up to the hills where the grass is less scorched by the burning sun. If the shepherd does not actually pitch his tent, as in the days of Abraham, his dwelling is not much more permanent. It is a hut built of logs, stakes, straw, and reeds, and the furniture, which the shepherd makes himself, is as primitive as the building; the bed is only a heap of straw in the corner, where he stretches his weary limbs after the work of the day. The encampment, with the hut and the fenced enclosures for the flocks, is called a "procoio," and when the time comes to move on to another spot the huts are taken to pieces and transported to the next camp, together with all the apparatus for milking and cheese-making.

In the evening the sheep are driven into the enclosure. The ewes are milked twice to make sure that none of the precious fluid is held back, and the milk is poured at once into the cauldron that hangs all ready over the fire beside the hut to be made into "peccorino" and "ricotta,"

The Roman Campagna

the cheeses for which the Campagna is so famous. When work is over the shepherds sit round the fire, eating their supper and smoking; but they soon retire to rest, first making up a good fire to frighten away the wolves, and soon all are sleeping quietly under the stars, the dogs keeping guard over their slumbers.

As soon as the day breaks there is movement in the fold. At the first gleam of light the dogs, which are like shaggy white wolves with powerful jaws and slouching gait, rise and stretch themselves, yawning lustily, the sheep rub against the fence to shake off the heavy night dew, and begin to nibble at the few blades of grass in the fold. The shepherd soon appears and drives out the bleating flock, and there begins another long day of wandering on the lonely plain or the green hill-side. The monotonous tinkling of the sheep-bell, the occasional bark of a dog, or the singing of a herd-boy are the only sounds that break the dead silence of the sparsely inhabited Campagna.

The shepherds are the most religious of the peasants; they sing litanies to the Madonna while milking, and never fail to recite the rosary before retiring to rest. They are also very industrious, and while watching their flocks they busy themselves in mending their clothes or making articles of furniture, such as wooden stools, on which they carve mottoes, emblems, or monograms, vying with each other as to who will produce the best work of art. For relaxation they set snares for birds and play the bagpipes or sing.

The shepherds come from the hills, and are quite a different type from the other inhabitants of the Campagna; they seem to belong to an older race, a race indigenous to the soil, and may well be the descendants of the



BUFFALOES IN THE CANALE PIO BESIDE THE APPIAN WAY.



HERD OF HORSES AT MACCARESE.



CANAL AT MACCARESE.



HORSES AND CATTLE IN THE LAKE OF NINFA.



CATTLE ON THE HILLS OF TOLFA.



BULL.



IN THE MARSH OF MACCARESE.

Sheep and Shepherds

original people who lived here even before the volcanic era, when the Tiber ran in a bed twenty miles wide. They were a round-eyed race of men these Aborigines who warred against the oval-eyed Etruscans and the Phrygians of Æneas when the latter landed on the coast long before the days of Rome. The pastoral life, the oldest form of human life, has come down to us almost unchanged from prehistoric days, as unchanged as Nature herself. If Ceres and Pales, if the Lares and Penates are no longer sacrificed to; if the old gods have given place to S. Martin, the protector of goats; to S. George, of horses; to S. Isidore, of oxen and ploughs; to S. Paschal, of sheep and shepherds, the shepherds still worship Nature and her marvellous works. They have a firm faith in the supernatural; they believe in incantations and witchcraft, and in evil spirits who have power to injure them. At sunset they solemnly chant prayers imploring protection against witches, and the music of the chant is a survival of the monochord counterpoint which was the primordial music of our Arian ancestors, and which still exists in the East.

But all the inhabitants of the Campagna are superstitious; not one of them would ever make a bend in a furrow, sow, or cut wood when the moon is waxing; they believe firmly that if the cock crows an even number of times it means good luck, but an uneven number foretells misfortune; that a pod with seven beans is lucky; that a child will stop growing if its head is touched with a cane; and that no allusion should be made to the thunderbolt. To-day, as thirty centuries ago, the shepherd always looks towards the hills during the month of May, and even when speaking rarely allows his eyes to wander from the heights.

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A writer who studied the life of the shepherd in its solitude and its closeness to nature, and had a keen appreciation of its beauty and poetry, says—

“By the broad, grass-grown roads that run like rivers to the plain, broken here and there by ruins, the flocks come down from the hills. Customs that have their origin in a dead religion still persist, transmitted from remote times, preserving the incomprehensible symbols of powers long passed away and traces of the greatness and beauty of an antecedent life. Rhythm and mystery, these two elements essential to every belief, still sway the people; their soul is expressed in song; with song they accompany their life at home and abroad; in every manifestation of life and death, song takes a part. Around the cradle and over the grave rise the slow monotonous chants as ancient as the race whose melancholy they so fitly express; perhaps they are parts of an ancient liturgy, survivors of a primordial religion which have descended from generation to generation, woven into their very being.

“The pastoral life of these remote ages was superseded by agriculture, but through the insatiable greed and idleness of the lords of the soil a return was made to pasture, and this was one of the chief causes of the fall of the Empire.

“In the time of the Republic, the shepherds had to go armed in order to defend themselves from attack. There is still in existence a statue of a shepherd wearing a cap that is a cross between the helmet of the legionary and a ‘pileus,’ and a soldier’s cloak, while his thighs are protected by strips of leather; with one hand he offers hay to his horse, and in the other he holds a long lance something like the staff of the shepherd of to-day.”



SHEEP STARTING OUT IN THE MORNING.



FLOCK OF SHEEP NEAR THE AQUEDUCT OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS.



SHEEP IN WINTER.



SHEPHERDS' HUTS.



THE FLOCK AT DAWN.

Sheep and Shepherds

Pliny tells us that up to the four-hundredth year of Rome sheep shearing was unknown in Italy, and this accounts for the fact that the statues of gods in the temples represent them as wearing tunics made of curly fleeces similar to those worn by the shepherds.

Great care was taken in the old times that the flock should not be crowded, for the countrymen told a tale of how a certain knight had kept too many sheep in a fold, and how they had all died, while the man who had only three sheep and drove them every day to the city to be milked gained three drachmas a day.

The department of the "domus culta" relating to sheep breeding and cheese-making is called the "masseria," and is under the superintendence of an overseer who has under his orders the shepherds, the cheese-makers, and the cowboys. These latter drive the lambs to Rome for sale, taking with them also the sheepskins and cheeses. The industry of cheese-making is one of great importance in the Campagna, where most of the land is under pasture. "Peccorino" and "ricotta" are both made of ewe's milk; the former is a cheese something like Parmesan and the latter is a rather firm white curd. It is made by throwing fresh milk into the whey after the cheese has been extracted and re-cooking it—hence the name, "ricotta"; it is sold in rush baskets covered with vine leaves, and is a very characteristic feature of the markets all over Italy.

All the shepherds assemble at the "masseria" for the sheep shearing, which is quite a festal time. Better food and even a little light wine is given to the workers, and they enjoy the society of their fellow-men after their long solitude. After the sheep are shorn and marked, before they leave the pens, the priest blesses them while the shepherds stand round bareheaded.

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Shepherds, especially in their youth, have something of a swagger. They have their sweethearts, to whom they send letters enclosing a flower, or the drawing of a heart, or of a sword, as an emblem of their sentiments. After they are married they see but little of their wives, for they are always on the move and only spend about one month of the year at home.

The payment of the shepherd varies on different estates, but all have certain rights that no one thinks of disputing. For instance, before starting for the hills, they each get a cheese weighing about a pound and a half, and on their return, one half the size. They are entitled to seven sheepskins in the year, from which they make their short woollen coats. Besides this they are entitled to bread, wine and stewed meat for their Christmas dinner ; at Carnival, they get either a pound of mutton tripe or a franc, and at Easter, eggs, sausages and a lamb in common.

Like all those who spend their lives in the company of silent nature, surrounded by hill and plain, the shepherds of the Campagna are silent and taciturn, and they possess a simple serenity and poetical delicacy that is not found among the dwellers in cities and villages. Many of them are extempore poets, and those who do not compose verses at least know the poetry of others, and they often beguile the solitary hours by singing the stanzas of Tasso and Ariosto to a sort of droning tune not without a beauty of its own. They write poems to the girls they are in love with, often wooing one woman humbly and devotedly for years.

“ I am a shepherd and milk the sheep ;
I make the ricotta and eat it ;
I am ashamed to make love to you.”



FLOCK OF SHEEP AT PONTE SCHIZZANELLO.



FLOCK OF SHEEP ON THE VIA ARDEATINA.



THE FLOCK STARTING OUT.

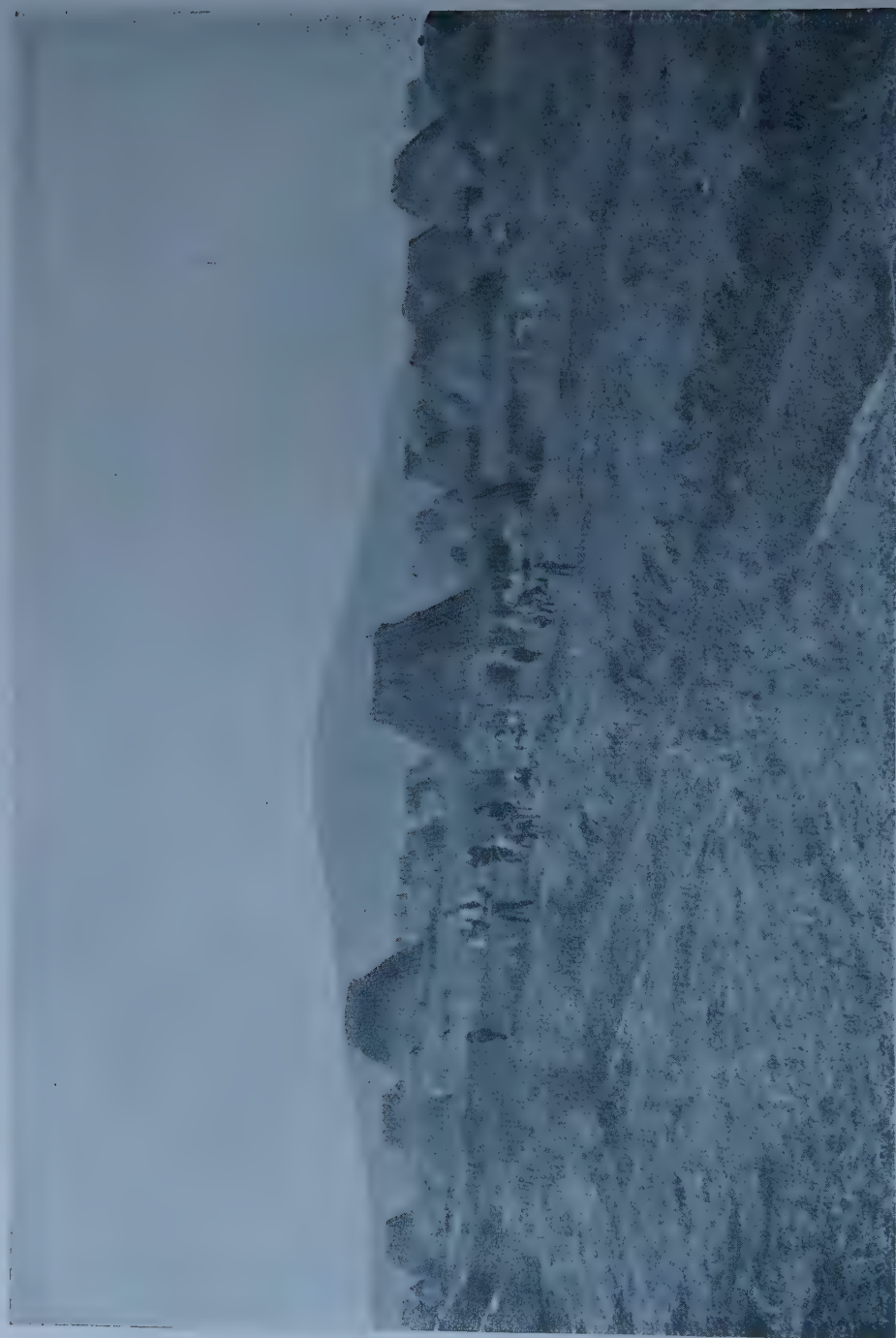


FLOCK COMING DOWN FROM THE HILLS.



SHEEP AT TOR DI QUINTO.

G. J. Safford



VILLAGE OF CARCHITTL.

Sheep and Shepherds

And again—

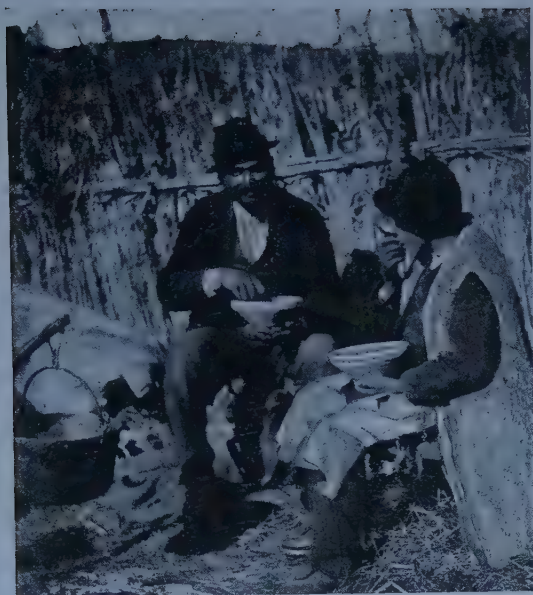
“When the sun rises in the morning
It grows gradually brighter.
And thus it is with woman,
The more she grows the more lovable she is.
The sun has three stages—
First dawn appears, then comes clearer light,
Then it rests on your beauty.”

The aloofness that the shepherd maintains from the other inhabitants of the Campagna may be a remnant of the ancestral hatred of the original dwellers for the invaders of the soil. For how many centuries have this strong, simple people, with their furrowed faces, watched their flocks on these hills and plains? For how many centuries, and for how many millenniums before Rome existed, have they seen the plants wither and turn brown in winter, and the daisies star the grass again in spring?

CHAPTER VII

THE VILLAGES OF HUTS

THE farmsteads of the "domus cultæ" scattered about the Campagna are hardly sufficient to house the staff of stewards, overseers, managers, custodians, purveyors, cow-boys, stable lads, and all the hands that are employed on the far-reaching acres of these immense estates. Those that look after the cattle and those that are employed about the farmstead usually live close by, while the shepherds are obliged, by the necessities of their work, to erect huts of straw, or of reeds and grasses, wherever their flocks may be grazing. Another category of workers that also live in isolated huts or hamlets are the "guitti," looked upon as the lowest class of peasants, for the literal translation of their name means "dirty ones," and their huts are perhaps the most primitive in the world. They form about four-fifths of the population of the Agro, where they toil for nine or ten months of the year, returning to the healthy hills of Latium or the Abruzzi, for a month or two each autumn. It is not lust of gain but hunger that drives them from their own sterile soil to these murderous plains to obtain food even at the cost of a yoke that is practically slavery, riveted by the "caporali" who enroll them, a yoke that even death does not break, for their sons have to go on after them, paying the iniquitous debt bequeathed them by their fathers.



THE SHEPHERDS' DINNER.



SHEPHERDS.



BLESSING THE SHEEP.



SHEEP IN A FOLD.

The Villages of Huts

They are looked upon as human goods and chattels, as active and submissive machines, known and cared for by none except the "caporale" who feeds them—after a fashion—and profits by their helplessness, for they rank in the eyes of the owner or tenant as mere implements and tools necessary for the cultivation of the land. They have no individuality, no citizenship, no defence; they are spoken of as "gangs" of nine, ten or eleven pence, not as human beings entitled to the most elementary rights of life. They live, with no contact with civilisation, in malaria-stricken regions, where medical assistance was till lately unobtainable. The soil, their loaf of bread, their debt to the "caporale," the "white man" who oppresses them, fever which is their constant companion; these, and a few rude religious practices and the certainty of six feet of ground on the spot where death overtakes them, constitute all their life and the sole topic of their thoughts and conversation.

The artist, the student, and the historian may be filled with admiration by the sight of the landscape surrounding Rome, but the philanthropist will be saddened by the thought of those thousands of forlorn human beings scattered through the country, subjected to arduous labour and driven to seek shelter in such miserable dwellings.

To stand in the midst of these hovels and look across the plain to where the cupola of S. Peter's rises on the horizon, is to doubt the evidence of one's senses; it seems impossible that the city, rich in marble and gilding, full of art treasures, and whose imperial pomp has astonished the world for centuries, should be so near cabins that resemble those of the Fiji Islands and Terra del Fuego.

An intelligent traveller wrote, after spending but a few hours in one of these villages: "One is carried back to the earliest dawn of life; here there is no shelter from the

The Roman Campagna

inclemency of the weather except lairs fit only for savages and wild beasts! One might be in the wilds of Africa instead of a few miles from Rome. I seem to have seen the primitive hearth on which our hairy ancestors cooked the prizes of the chase; the same primitive domestic utensils are still to be found in the hut, of which the construction is as primordial as that of the earliest nomad. Upon returning to the city one wonders if by some magic enchantment one has not been carried back to the dawn of life."

This is a true description, but words fail to give a picture of the misery and sadness of life among the poor workers of the Campagna, whose life is a perpetual struggle, for each crop is a battle with Nature and every hour is lived in peril of the demon Fever, who claims innumerable victims each season. Yet they come down every year from the mountains, a band of more than fifty thousand nomads, to live in the scattered huts of the plain almost lost to view in the waste, and unnoticed by those who pass along the main roads that cross the Campagna in all directions. They come to seek work, either alone or in companies, but all find themselves under the yoke of a "caporale," who enrolls this migratory population, and who makes a speculation of this helpless people. He acts as intermediary between the landlords and the workers, he receives their salaries, a goodly portion of which often finds its way into his own pocket, and he makes no small sum out of the hard bargain that he drives while engaging them; he undertakes to supply them with necessary provisions, for which he charges exorbitant prices and supplies very inferior goods. No houses are provided, so they are obliged to erect for themselves huts of straw or of the canes of Indian corn, thatching them with dry



SHEEP IN WINTER.



FLOCK OF SHEEP NEAR THE RIVER OSA.



CROSSING A WALL.



GOATS IN WINTER.



GOATS ROUND SHEPHERD'S HUT.



SHEEP IN SNOW NEAR VIA FLAMINIA.



VILLAGE OF PROCOIO NUOVO.



VILLAGE OF CORCOLLE.



THE VILLAGE OF SALONE.

The Villages of Huts

branches. The door is only a hole which one must stoop to enter, and the hearth is built in the centre of the hut on the bare ground with no outlet for the smoke. Most of these huts are small, and into one which would hold four people comfortably, fifteen to twenty are huddled, and those that would appear to be built for the reception of two or three families shelter sometimes as many as one hundred and fifty persons. They live and sleep promiscuously on beds of hay or grass, with pillows of straw. In the rectangular huts, which are sometimes twenty yards long, whole tribes swarm in the smoky atmosphere of these long, dark tunnels. Food is prepared in the hole that is dug out in the centre of the hut; here they cook Indian corn, which with boiled mint, cress, and other herbs forms their staple food. They have named this broth "cooked water," a true denomination of the concoction, and in this they soak slices of hard brown bread when they happen to have any.

The grouping together of two or three dozen huts constitutes a village, which is generally surrounded by a fence or rough hedge of elders, and sometimes there are a few patches of vegetables.

I will not endeavour to describe my visit to these hamlets, the picture I should draw might appear to the reader exaggerated, but instead I will give the impressions of a well-known member of parliament, who had spent many years in Africa far from civilisation, and was therefore able to compare the condition of the poor workers of these two continents.

"On a plain nestling under a low hill, hidden from the deserted Via Tiburtina, we found the hamlet of Salone.

"It is composed of about twenty-five huts erected regardless of order, huddled close together in the small

The Roman Campagna

space which was all that the avaricious overseer could spare these poor people out of the immense estate.

“They represent the rudimental form of habitation, such as man lived in after the days of cavern dwellings; they are rectangular, with sloping roofs, and a frame made of sticks, to which are bound grasses, dry branches, and maize canes. In every one dwells a whole family, which, given the singularly prolific tendencies of our agricultural classes, rarely numbers less than eight or ten.

“The interior of these huts is a miserable picture: the entrance, which is low and narrow, leads into an airless space, in the centre of which is the primitive hearth composed of two stones and a heap of ashes. The air is impregnated with smoke and everything is covered with a bituminous layer of soot, the smoke finally escaping through a hole in the roof. The beds, if one can call them such, are spread along the walls of the huts, and on these the inhabitants rest their weary limbs, heaped together regardless of sex or age. The clothes, or more correctly the rags, that these miserable creatures do not happen to be wearing at the moment hang on the sticks of the walls with the few kitchen utensils, the cauldron in which the hominy is made, the frying-pan for the Indian corn cakes, and perhaps an odd pot or pan. Such is one hut, and throughout the Campagna they are all the same, and there are thousands of them.

“The light only penetrates through the narrow low door; sometimes the huts are hewn out of tufa rock, and the stone outside becomes black from the smoke which issues from the aperture, for in these the small hearth is built in a corner against the wall; it is only two or three stones placed in the narrow space between the two rows of beds.



FAMILY OF PEASANTS.



REAPER'S HUT.



NOMADS FROM THE HILLS.



VILLAGE OF SANTA PRONULA.



VILLAGE NEAR THE PORT OF FIUMACINO.

The Villages of Huts

“The men are clad in incredible patches, the women’s clothes are in rags, their hair unkempt, the children are sickly, dirty and rickety, and it is one of the saddest sights imaginable to watch the poor creatures crouching round the hearth, in an atmosphere so dense as to give them the appearance of ghosts, cooking a little hominy or roasting the flesh of some cow or sheep found dead on the plain, or even dug up from the ground where it had been buried, for this is their only opportunity of tasting meat, and to them it is a treat.

“In the caverns hewn out of the rock, as in the huts built of straw, the most repugnant promiscuousness of the sexes is inevitable; some of the women who still have some remnant of modesty try to isolate their corner with a lattice-work of dry twigs, but often the hut is so small that it is impossible even to indulge in this luxury, and they have to lie side by side all crowded together.

“When we arrived at the village it was dinner-time; unseasoned hominy was being eaten by nearly all, served upon pieces of wood, as they had no plates.

“I asked one: ‘Are you not hungry?’

“‘We are hungry enough,’ answered an old man, ‘but it is not easy to swallow this stuff,’ and all came crowding round me, making me look at the damp, damaged, musty-smelling flour, which their ‘caporale’ had supplied as an advance on their wages, and begging me to taste the bread and hominy made with it that I might be better able to see that they did not exaggerate.”

There are several thousands of these poor peasants who do not even possess the small sum necessary to buy the wood frame wherewith to build a hut, and who settle down in caves dug out of the tufa hills. One comes across these quite unexpectedly throughout the Campagna,

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and the casual passer-by would never guess that they sheltered whole families of workers, who live there not for one night but for months and whole seasons. The nearest of these to Rome are on the Prima Porta Road, at the Grotto Rosso, and on the Via Flaminia only a short distance from the Villa Borghese and the beautiful church of Santa Maria del Popolo, one of the glories of the Renaissance, in which Sansovino and Nino da Fiesole, in the spring of Italian art, gave to marble and bronze the breath of immortality.

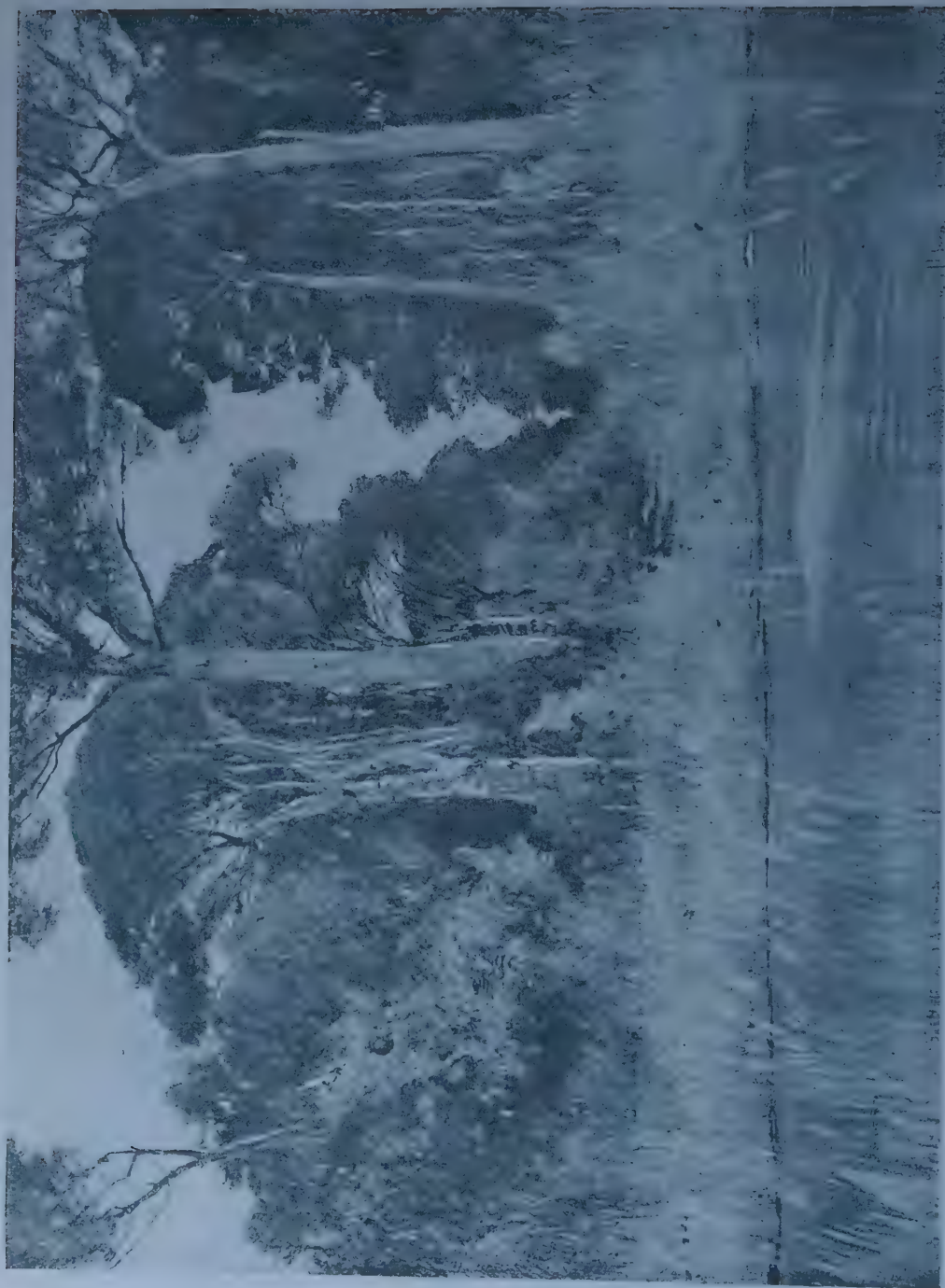
There is great need of missionaries as pioneers in introducing civilisation into the Roman Campagna. The work has already been started by the Women's Union, which has taken the initiative in carrying moral and material assistance to the poor people both in the Campagna proper and in the Pontine Marshes, and the Italian Red Cross Society, in order to come to their aid, has organised a branch exactly as in time of war.

The Women's Union began work six years ago in a small way, with the admirable aim of striving for the moral redemption of these people by means of education, limiting itself to teaching only the alphabet at the outset as the first step towards awakening the minds of these poor pariahs. They started Sunday classes, with the help of some willing and kindly schoolmasters from Rome, whom one met trudging across the narrow pathways of the Campagna when the improvised schoolroom was beyond the track of tram or train, to impart some elementary knowledge to men and children, collected in a shed in the centre of some hamlet, a temple dedicated, so to say, to a new divinity: "the Alphabet."

There are three characteristic and important villages to the right of Via Casilina, close to Zagarolo, at the foot of



INHABITANTS OF HUTS.



G. A. Sarlorio,

THE PINE WOOD ON THE SHORE OF OSTIA.



VILLAGE OF LUNGHEZZA FROM THE WEST.



VILLAGE OF LUNGHEZZA FROM THE EAST.



BUILDING A HUT.



TEMPORARY HUTS FOR REAPERS.



HUTS ON CARTS.

The Villages of Huts

the Alban Hills. In these the huts are not scattered or placed pell-mell, but are arranged with some kind of order; a sunken path runs up the hill through the village with smaller pathways branching from it. On rainy days these carry the water into the principal street, turning it into a torrent. These are the primitive villages of Marcelli, Carchitti, and Colle di Fuori, inhabited by peasants who come from the heights of Palestrina, especially from Capranica, in search of more fertile soil. They form a colony settled on land which does not belong to them, without territorial rights, defence or justice; they are a patriarchal community, free, but still at the mercy of the owners of the land they occupy and of his agents, who compel them to work on the estate at a ridiculously low wage; less unfortunate than their nomad brethren, they are in truth the founders of the first nucleus of a future municipality.

Such is the life to-day of those pariahs, the same as it was yesterday and as it will be to-morrow; they live and die in the dumb, impassive silence of the plain, patient and uncomplaining like the cattle they tend.

Little has been done for them, though attention has often been called to their miserable state since the time of Garibaldi, who denounced their existence as a national shame. Parliamentary committees have made reports upon the intolerable life of the poor people in this territory and the miserable sweating system to which they are subjected, but up to now no steps have been taken to really improve their condition.

The day-labourers form "companies," as we have already seen. They are subdivided into three classes: the "scelte" (chosen workers), "bastarde" (mixed workers), and "monelli" (the boys), according to whether they are competent work-

The Roman Campagna

men, general labourers, or women and children. All earn most inadequate wages, varying from one franc twenty-five a day, earnings of the best worker, to fifty centimes for the children. One might say that they are bartered for as in the days of slavery, for the landowner bargains with the "caporale" for one or several companies at a fixed price, and he engages the workers at the lowest figure possible, beating down prices and cheating them both on their food and housing in order to increase his private gains. He makes in this way a nice round sum, for it not unusually means a deduction of two or three pence per day on each labourer's hard-earned money. In addition to this, he finds means of making a profit by advancing them ready cash with which to purchase the few articles of furniture they cannot possibly do without.

They are badly paid, badly fed, and worse housed, these toilers on the soil, which they enrich by their efforts, and they have no history, the only trace that they leave being the graves which mark the resting-place of some victim of man and fever. Cut off from all intercourse with the outer world, ravaged by disease, they are the real, though unconscious, martyrs for the prosperity of the cities. This neglect in which the first factor in the cultivation of the soil—man—is left in a region where his rarity should give him special privileges, is one of the many causes, and not the least, that keeps agriculture in such a deplorable state in the Roman Campagna.

"The life of the 'guitti,'" says a writer on the Campagna, "is the life of a mere beast. Here to-day and there to-morrow, completely at the mercy of the 'caporali,' they are a resigned race"; and as an instance of this great resignation he relates the following incident:—

"A caporale had a persuasive method of making



THE MOTHER.



THE ALPHABET.



VILLAGE OF PANTANO.



HUTS AT GABI.

The Villages of Huts

up accounts with his dependents, proceeding in this manner:—

“‘I gave you three francs in Rome and two to purchase a caldron, making in all six.’

“‘No,’ the poor creature replied timidly, ‘three and two make five.’”

“‘I tell you that three and two are six.’” And after arguing the fact at length, the “caporale” enforced his argument by adding: “‘I tell you three and two are six! You see this?’ shaking a formidable stick in the frightened man’s face who, out of sheer fear, replied, ‘Yes, sir, all right then, three and two make six.’”

When the companies emigrate from one place to another, the sight is a very picturesque one. Men and women laden with their poor belongings cross the fields, with the children helping to carry what they can, like a long gipsy procession; very young babies are carried on the mothers’ heads in flat baskets; the older ones straggle along, continually admonished when they lag too far behind with the fearful threat, “Come along, or you will be killed!”

A recent report of the Red Cross Society shows that there is an extraordinary number of boys—“monelli,” as they are termed—at work in the Campagna, mostly under fifteen, and it gives a true description of the treatment they receive, even near the gates of Rome. I shall quote from the scrupulously true report of an illustrious pioneer who writes with authority as one thoroughly acquainted with the subject.

“The poorest families, in exchange for the sum of forty or fifty francs, give up their children to the ‘caporali’; even the less poor get rid in this way of the numerous foundlings who swarm in Latium, where they are put out to nurse and made over to the foster-mother with a small

The Roman Campagna

monthly payment. These boys, who are taken and kept only to be used as a means of gain, work like beasts without protection in the world and without a soul to listen to their complaints. The 'caporale' who has enlisted them only binds himself to provide them with hominy and shoes, while he takes their wages for himself, making the young slaves toil constantly, urging them on with a stick, even when they are ill, to tasks which are far beyond their age and strength.

"The villages of huts are to be found all over the Campagna, as they are almost the only accommodation available for the workers. Sometimes they are close to the farmhouse, built in the shadow of the feudal tower; oftener they are isolated, mud-coloured groups some distance from the road, from which they are concealed by the slope of the ground. They give the impression of prehistoric dwellings lost in the depths of unknown continents.

"One of the most typical 'domus culta' near Rome is Lunghezza, situated on the banks of the winding Anio on the way to Tivoli, where the river runs under shady willows. It is both a castle and a hamlet. The large castle stands on a low wooded hill, which from a distance looks like a park, with its luxuriant pines and oaks rising in contrast with the surrounding hillocks, which remind one of the sandy dunes on a desert shore.

"Only the windows remain of the grand architecture of the sixteenth century. Around the court of the castle are grouped the habitations of the bailiffs and other permanent workmen, the tavern, sheds, granaries, and the church. Further afield on the hill close by live the 'guitti,' who have lately been provided with a school-house. Like savages, these 'guitti' look with astonishment and respect on those who can make signs upon paper and understand



A HUT SCHOOL.



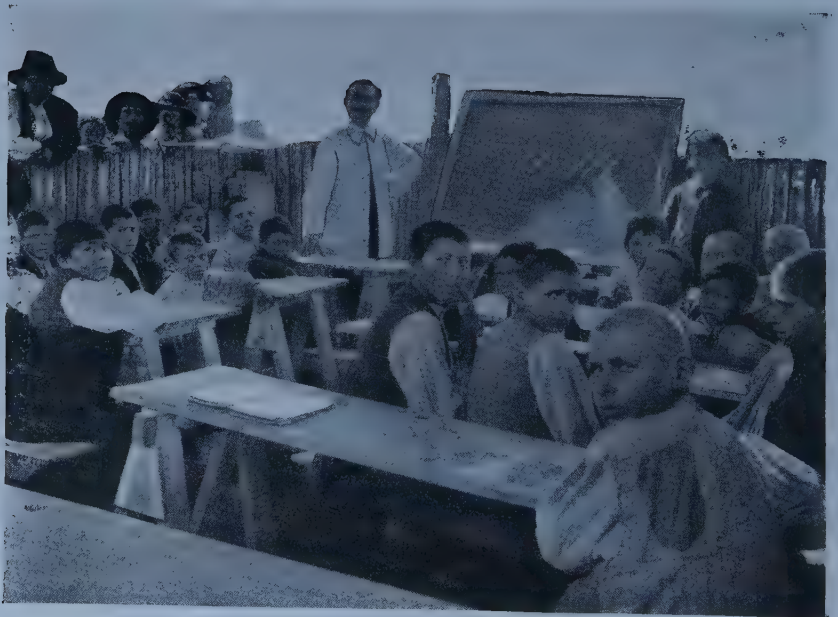
HUT SCHOOL AT PANTANO.



HUTS AT BOCCIA.



VILLAGE OF HUTS AT COLLE DI FUORI.



HOLIDAY SCHOOL AT CARCHITTI.



CART-HUT OF A NOMAD FAMILY.



VILLAGE OF HUTS AT CERVELLETTA.



HUTS.



GIRLS BELONGING TO A COMPANY OF "GUITTL"

The Villages of Huts

them. Their expression cannot easily be forgotten by those who have seen it; it seems to say, 'It is only just that he who can thus read and write should be obeyed.' Their torpid brains have not even had the elementary culture of learning the alphabet, and how can they be expected to study after bending over the furrows from dawn to sunset."

Such then is the life, and such is the condition of the workers of the Campagna, who live in huts hidden among hillocks, along the undulating plain; sober and laborious, they toil on continuously in the midst of solitude and silence until death overtakes them. Of the two elements of migratory civilisation, the hearth and the road, one—the hearth—alone remains, a stone in the centre of the hut as in palæolithic ages.

The movement which eight centuries ago gave free towns to Northern Italy and saw the birth of corporations of workers, rural as well as urban, did not affect this district, and it was even passed by the French Revolution, which brought such notable economic results to the peasants of Europe. To the north, south and east are the more flourishing regions of Umbria, the Abruzzi, and Campania, and as soon as the borders are crossed more decent dwellings are found, and more civilised customs prevail.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VILLAS OF THE CAMPAGNA

By what magic, on the slopes overlooking the barren stretches and the stagnant waters of the dreary plain, have parks been created that are full of a beauty and a fragrance like that of the Garden of Hesperides and the enchanted alleys of Alcinoos? Beneath their slopes lies the Campagna in all its sadness with its few hamlets scattered widely, like sails on a wild sea. But on the Alban Hills and the classic heights of Tivoli there is a riot of rich vegetation, laurel groves, avenues of ilexes, solemn cypresses, roses, carpets of violets, a luxuriance as great and as fascinating as that which lends such charm to the villas in the city itself.

On these hills the citizens of Republican and Imperial Rome enjoyed the delights of country life, and here the Latins of the plain took refuge from the Barbaric invaders.

The beauties of the landscape are sometimes mirrored in lakes; sometimes they darken in green coolness under the spray of the waterfalls of Anio; sometimes they are enclosed by mossy walls with pillared gateways that stand as guardians to the treasures within. For in the grounds of the villas the beauties of nature are concentrated and brought to perfection—silvery olive groves, gnarled elms, tufts of fern nestling under mossy trunks and smiling



HUTS.



A CAVE DWELLING.



VILLAGE OF VIVARO NEAR ROCCA DI PAPA : GATHERING INDIAN CORN.



PEASANT CHILDREN.



HUTS NEAR CISTERNA.

The Villas of the Campagna

stretches of daisy-starred grass are all here as well as the more artificial beauties of gardens.

On the heights of Tusculum, by the blue lakes in their cup-shaped craters, by the waterfalls of Anio, the goddess of beauty wanders, wreathed with roses, as if this were a kingdom reserved for her worship. And in every one of the villas an ideal spot could be found in which to erect a temple in her honour; in the palm groves or under the dome-like foliage of the avenues of Villa Muti; amid the wonderful terraces of Villa Aldobrandini, where the sparkling water rushes down past stairways clothed with ferns, while the perfume of moist violets and of roses and oleanders is wafted like incense on the breeze; or where, within their green hedges, the wide grounds of the Villa Mondragone extend with their fountains in lichen-stained basins shaded by greenery, and their avenues of secular ilexes. How solemn are these avenues at the vesper hour, when the surrounding hills are bathed in a golden haze or flushed with a soft rose-coloured light, fit approaches to a temple. Villa Falconiera, too, is worthy of the goddess, where the severe lines of towering cypresses through which filter slanting rays of sunshine, are marshalled round the formal lake whose surface is broken by slender jets of water.

The gardens that lie round the lakes in the Alban Hills are so sheltered that they are natural hot-houses and the vegetation is marvellously rich; pergolas wreathed with red and white and yellow roses surround beds of hyacinths and geraniums, shrubberies of lilac, oleander and mimosa grow in the meadows amid wild irises, stocks and verbenas, and the maidenhair waves in the breeze round the edges of ponds covered with water-lilies. Wild roses and ivy climb over the high red and grey crags from whose crevices trickle tiny rivulets, wending their way round stones and under

The Roman Campagna

brambles, increasing in size as tributaries unite, till they reach the sheltered meadows where ruby strawberries peep from under their leaves.

The outlines of these hills are gradual and flowing, lying wide to the transparent arch of the blue sky.

But it is not only on the Albans that we find these sumptuous villas. On the Ciminian Hills to the north of Rome, on a crest near Caprarola stands the great Villa Farnese surrounded by chestnut woods; it was begun in the middle of the sixteenth century by Sangallo and completed by Vignola. It is a stately building in the curious form of a pentagon ornamented by three cornices outside, while inside it is circular.

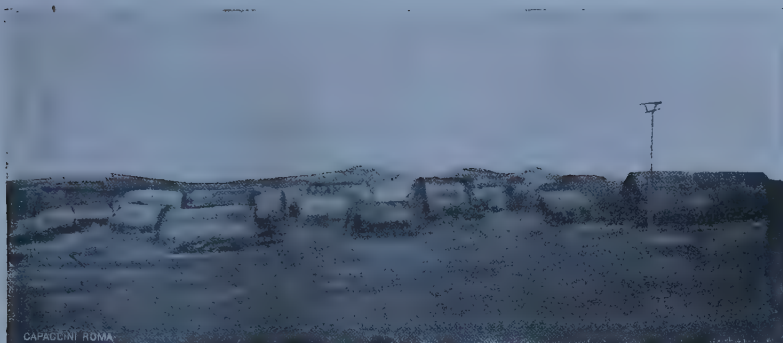
At the other extremity of the Campagna, on the heights of Poli, is the famous palace of the Conti family, the favourite summer resort of Innocent III. It is like a fortress in the midst of woods and gardens with avenues of cypresses and many fountains.

Another celebrated country place is Villa Lante in a beautiful district near Bagnaia, where the park is truly regal with its terraces and sumptuous staircases.

All these villas of the Latin hills, situated where Nature has lavished her richest treasures, gather those natural beauties together and perfect the work that Nature had begun. They were nearly all built in the sixteenth century, that century whose ambition it was to revive the splendours of the Imperial age in the city itself and in the country round. All the works of that era were conceived in the spirit of titanic grandeur of which Michael Angelo was the highest exponent; they were undertaken with a magnificence and amplitude of design that were too great for one century to complete, and the seventeenth century had to finish what the sixteenth began. It was under the



PEASANTS.



VILLAGE OF GRANARACCIO.



HUT OF A "BUTTERO."



SHEPHERD'S HUT.



CONICAL AND RECTANGULAR HUTS.



FOUNTAIN IN THE VILLA FALCONIERI.



VILLA PAMPHILI, ON THE JANICULUM.



B. Croatto.

VILLA BORGHESE AND MONTE MARIO.



B. Croatto.

ENTRANCE TO VILLA FALCONIERI.



VILLA D'ESTE AT TIVOLI.

The Villas of the Campagna

influence of these grandiose ideas that the villas rose on sites where the Cæsars had dwelt, amid scenes famous in history and indissolubly linked with the memory of men of renown.

At Tivoli we have the ruins of the old and a perfect specimen of the more modern not far from each other. The sixteenth-century Villa D'Este rises in the midst of a delicately austere landscape where the silvery olive is the prevailing tree and its terraced garden is a magic place, an enchanted land, such as that which Botticelli painted in his "Spring." The tall cypresses with trunks as dark as basalt, the masses of laurels and scarlet oleanders, the carpets of violets and asphodels, the trellises of wistaria, the wreaths of roses climbing the acacias and the orange groves with the fruit peeping from under velvety foliage, stand out from a background of pines where the light throws golden threads from branch to branch. Like the landscape of Botticelli's picture, this garden has the nobility of Elysian fields and the wistful fascination of enchanted isles. It is a paradise, where every line, every colour lends enchantment to the passing moment, and we feel that had Dante wished to depict for us a pagan, or even a simply human, paradise, instead of a Christian heaven, the abode of angels, he would not have pictured it otherwise. The gaiety and sweetness of the flowers set in their circle of noble trees and the ideal purity of the light and air make this garden on the hill-side a thing of delicate, unearthly beauty. What delights are to be found here when spring with her gentle breath touches the meadows; then flowers open and speak of love, the laurel puts forth new leaves, emblems of glory, and the soul responds to the call of both, while the chorus of life is fraught with human and divine harmonies. Spring performs the miracle of renewing youth and she fills us with an indescribable ecstasy.

The Roman Campagna

Like a goddess she comes from happier shores, bringing with her a dowry of life and hope, giving love to youth and flowers to all.

Do you remember the face of Botticelli's "Spring"? It is full of mystery; not merry but pensive, expressive of holy and loving thought. She is conscious that she is sent as a goddess of strength and beauty to a world where there is a continual struggle between the powers of good and evil, to bring joy to humanity that less friendly deities afflict with so many ills. She knows the tragedies of life, but if this knowledge throws a veil of sadness over the wise peacefulness of her maiden eyes, the more ineffably sweet are her lips and the redder are the roses in her lap. Thus she passes, scattering an ecstatic joy that leaves no desire save that the moment should last for ever.

At the foot of the hills below Tivoli, on the edge of the plain, lie the ruins of one of the largest of the imperial villas, that of Hadrian. None among the magnificent villas in the environs of Rome could rival it in its size, variety, and beauty. It was so large that it was a city in itself and a treasure-house of art, and our museums seem poor when we compare their contents with the number and the excellence of the masterpieces collected in its porticoes and courts.

When building this palace, says Tomassetti, Hadrian had in his mind the countries he had visited in his travels throughout the empire and the edifices he had seen, especially the Lyceum, the Academy, the Prytaneus, the Pæcile of Athens, the Canopus of Egypt and the Vale of Tempé in Thessaly. There were baths, theatres, libraries, barracks, and all other adjuncts of a palace.

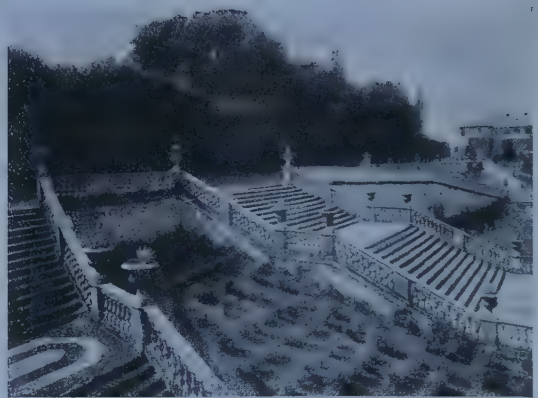
In spite of recent excavations, even the outlines of



VILLA MUTI AT FRASCATI.



STONE BOAT IN THE VILLA ALDOBRANDINI, FRASCATI.



STEPS IN VILLA TORLONIA, FRASCATI.



FOUNTAIN IN THE VILLA FARNESE.



FOUNTAIN IN THE VILLA TORLONIA.



B. Croatto.

LAKE IN VILLA FALCONIERI.

The Villas of the Campagna

many of the edifices are scarcely visible. The Greek theatre, however, can be clearly traced and its size determined; fragments of a fluted column and a Corinthian capital were found in it which were probably part of the decoration of the stage. To the east of the Greek theatre are the remains of the larger Latin theatre which is scarcely recognisable. To the south rises the imposing mass of the ruins of the imperial residence, where a rectilinear peristylum with twelve Doric columns is still to be seen as well as the remains of the "stadium" and the "thermæ," which are very grand. Farther on, on a height that overlooks a greater part of the large park, are the ruins of the Prytaneus, standing up like a tower; in the fourteenth century this part of the villa was turned into a castle or monastery and some of the ruins belong to that period. From this height, where oblivion blends together Pagan and Christian remains, the view of the dwelling-place built by the learned emperor is very grand; Rome and Athens, the ideas and pomp of antiquity live again in the gigantic traces of that palace which embodied the magnificent dream of an emperor in the wondrous waning hour of Epicurean and Stoic thought.

With its stadium and library, providing for the discipline of the body and the culture of the mind in the midst of meditative repose, such a discipline and culture as that which had produced men like the Scipios, Hadrian's Villa lives in the mind as a lofty monument of the beauty and sovereign greatness of the ancient spirit which took life with a serenity that enabled it to fulfil its mission in the world with dignity.

During the Renaissance, Hadrian's Villa was pulled down and reduced to its present state of desolation. In the middle of the fifteenth century, Pope Pius II., who delighted

The Roman Campagna

in visiting the ancient monuments in the environs of Rome, wrote of it: "At about three miles from the town (Tivoli), the Emperor Hadrian built a splendid villa similar to a great castle. The large and lofty arches of the temples, the remains of the columns of the noble peristylum and porticoes, traces of the tanks where waters from the Anio brought coolness in summer, are still there. Age has defaced all things, ivy now clothes those walls which once were covered with tapestries and cloth of gold; thorns now grow where sat the tribunes in purple tunics, and serpents dwell in the chambers of queens; so transitory is all human greatness."

And Professor Tomassetti writes: "The cypresses seem to weep over the destruction of this imperial palace of delight, over the ruins of crumbling edifices which, corroded by centuries, raise their broken summits like skeletons amidst the living trees, suggesting thoughts of the brief duration of human greatness."

The ruins extend for about seven miles; no wonder that in the late Middle Ages they were called "Old Tivoli," as if it were the site of the ancient city.

Below the town of Tivoli are the waterfalls of Anio. I find the following note in a pocket-book where for years I have jotted down impressions and descriptions of land and sea in the Latin country: "Below the graceful circular temple of the Sibyl echoes the continuous roar of the waterfalls! The deep glen which has been carved out by the impetuous river is like a magic poem, and the fascination of the whirl of foam-crested waters fills the soul with sadness. But with hope also, for does not the voice of the waters as they fall into the abyss prophesy their joyful reappearance when they shall again spring forth into the sunlight in sparkling jets?"



AVENUE IN VILLA CONTI, POLI.



B. Croatto.

VILLA BORGHESE, FRASCATI.



VILLA LANCELOTTI, FRASCATI.



VILLA LANTE, BAGNAIA.



VILLA BARBERINI, CASTEL GANDOLFO.



PORTICO OF VILLA FALCONIERI.



B. Croatto.

STEPS IN VILLA D'ESTE.



VILLA D'ESTE : VIEW FROM THE TERRACE.

The Villas of the Campagna

“Above the falls, the river divides into two branches which precipitate themselves over the cliff with a roar like thunder; they mask their weight of waters with an ethereal vapour and the silvery mass seems permanent, an example of how illusory things may be; those waters that seem so feathery crush the rocks as they fall, and they rush ever onwards with untiring energy. The swift, mighty wave falls into the deep channel hollowed out by its violence amongst the thickly growing evergreens moistened by the dew of its breath, ever pressing on with noise and foam towards the unknown, then, after its last dizzy leap, winding peacefully through the meadows. There it runs in its deep bed shaded by overhanging willows past the silent and solitary arches of Ponte Lucano, and under the crenellated tower of Ponte Nomentana, and its tortuous course finally ends in the broad, sunny waters of the Tiber.”

CHAPTER IX

THE MOUTH OF THE TIBER

LOOKING from the heights of Monte Mario, above where the sixteenth-century Villa Madama lies in a fold of the hill with its avenues of cypresses, the eye can follow the course of the Tiber from Ponte Molle—the old Ponte Milvius—till it loses itself amongst the amethyst mountains towards the north. The horizon has the clear delicacy of early dawn and the peaks stand out like those in the morning landscapes of Pinturicchio. These are the Sabine Hills and Umbrian Mountains which lie veiled in light, the guardians of the mystic land of S. Francis, from which the river issues to run through the Latin amphitheatre.

Here it flows under low heights crowned with small towns or ruined castles, past Borghetto and Stimigliano; making a wide bend round lonely Soracte, it passes below the hamlets of Marcigliana and Castel Giubileo, where large herds of white oxen pasture on the flat stretches of land left by its waters, and where the cowboys who guard them often pass hours sitting on their horses in the middle of the current. It receives numerous affluents, which cut their way through the barren meadows in deep, tortuous beds; some of them, such as the Cremera of the Fabians and of Villa Glori, running past the Acropolis of Veie, are more celebrated than many mighty rivers that drain whole continents.



B. Croatto.

HADRIAN'S VILLA, TIVOLI.



G. R. Ballance.

STEPS LEADING TO THE BATHS IN HADRIAN'S VILLA.



RUINS IN HADRIAN'S VILLA.

Piranesi.

The Mouth of the Tiber

When it reaches the low ground, after passing the tufa quarries of Grotte Rosse, the classic Saxa Rubra, where in imperial times there was a post station for change of horses, the clear icy waters of the Anio join the Tiber, preserving their limpid clearness for some time before they mingle with the muddy current.

The Anio sweeps out into the sunshine of the broad Tiber from under the shadow of its willows as from under a portico of branches; its velocity has enabled it to dig for itself a deep bed, so far below the level of the plain that even the drooping willows cannot reach the water. It is the principal affluent of the Tiber and the next most important river of Latium. Like the Tiber, its waters have brought down large quantities of soil which have formed flats along its course.

In very ancient times the Anio was called *Pareusis* as the Tiber was called *Albula*; in the later Middle Ages it received the name of Teverone.

It rises in the Simbruinian Mountains near Filettino; two small rivulets unite at the beginning of a fine glen down which the river rushes to Subiaco, receiving by the way the contributions of many springs. A little above Subiaco were the famous Neronian sluices which dammed the water and formed three small lakes. Below these, it sweeps past picturesque crags and green meadows round to the neighbourhood of Tivoli where it divides: one branch follows the original bed and forms lofty waterfalls, visible from the heights and from the plain; the other branch is carried by two subterranean conduits through Monte Catillo to the famous cascades below the temple of the Sibyl; reuniting they pursue their rapid course towards the Tiber and Rome.

The ancient Romans made the Anio navigable by dredging from Ponte Lucano to its mouth in order to trans-

The Roman Campagna

port the stones from the quarries in the valley, but now the banks of the river have fallen in, and the channel is encumbered with tree-roots and interrupted by sandbanks and small islets covered with willows and poplars. The last part of its course below Ponte Nomentana is specially intricate; trees grow thickly along its banks and the branches often meet and interlace, throwing a veil of dense shade over its waters. A dark vault of branches, then the yellow line of the Tiber, and the Anio merges in the larger river.

Thus reinforced the Tiber sweeps through Rome, where between the uniform walls of the embankment the volume of the waters seems greater. It flows past the ancient Tomb of Hadrian, past the new Palace of Justice, and past the still mediæval quarter of the Torre Anguillara; it washes, as it has done for two millenniums, the one remaining arch of Ponte Emilio, the first stone bridge built by the Romans, begun by the Censors Lucius Emilius and Fulvius Nobilius, and completed by Scipio Africanus and Lucius Munnius Acheus, the bridge which in the Middle Ages was called Senatoris.

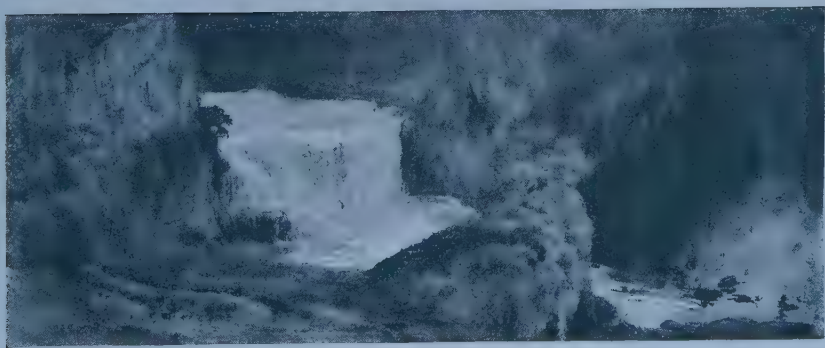
After the Tiburine Island and the Ripa Grande, where sailing boats from the sea anchor, the river once more passes out into the Campagna, which is here of a yellowish shade instead of the tawny colour of the upper reaches.

Beyond the white basilica of S. Paul's and the wind-blown eucalyptus-trees of the Tre Fontane, the banks are low and shaded by drooping willows, silvery poplars, elders, and elms, while reeds grow thickly along the edge of the water. The river broadens out here as if it breathed more freely after leaving the city, and the current reflects the faint tints of the plain and the pale muddy green of its own vegetation.

It winds like a great serpent towards its mouth, four-



LARGE FALL ON THE ANIO.



G. A. Sartorio.

LOWER FALLS ON THE ANIO.



FOUNTAIN AND BASIN IN THE VILLA D'ESTE.

B. Croft.



IN VILLA ALDOBRANDINI.



TEMPLE OF THE SIBYL, TIVOLI



SMALL WATER-FALLS ON THE ANIO.



VILLA GIULIA, NEAR FLAMINIA.

From an airship.



VILLA BORGHESE : PIAZZALE DI SIENA.

From an airship.

The Mouth of the Tiber

teen miles from Rome, towards that sacred, mythical spot "where the waters of Tiber mix themselves with salt," where Æneas consulted the Augurs before starting to the mountains that beckoned him onwards.

On the right bank, about six miles from Rome, stands Magliana, a place that takes its name from the family of Manlius, who had property here. It is wonderful how the Roman names have persisted in the Campagna; they are still found everywhere, the only survivors amid many wrecks of history. The Ancient Empire has fallen, the Holy Roman Empire has come and gone, the temporal power of the popes is a thing of the past, but the names remain as a perpetual memorial that nothing obliterates.

Pope Sixtus IV. founded a splendid palace at Magliana, which was enlarged and embellished by subsequent popes and became the favourite residence of Leo X. Since the seventeenth century it has fallen into neglect, and is now inhabited by workmen.

The little river Galeria falls into the Tiber close by, and a little farther on is the Malafede, with the village of the same name at its mouth.

Between these brooks there lies a little hollow shaded by willows, and on the rock above it are three farm-houses, breaking the monotony of the Campagna; this is the site of Ficana, Rome's first enemy. When the energetic founders of the city on the Palatine, in their search for an outlet beyond the unhealthy zone that surrounded the seven hills, pushed their way to the sea on the one side and the fertile hills on the other, they met their first obstacle in flourishing Ficana which then ruled over the lower valley of the Tiber. It had been founded by the obscure Aborigines who dwelt in the plain in prehistoric days.

The Roman Campagna

In this fight Rome was victorious. And we can imagine with what contempt the Imperial legions of succeeding centuries, returning from Great Britain and Africa, looked down on this village which had been the earliest opponent of the city.

I find the following in my Note-book, jotted down in pencil, as I glided down the river in a roughly built boat through the silent country :—

“The river becomes ever more solitary; for hours I have not seen even a fisherman’s bark. It flows, deserted and tortuous, towards the west, through the monotony of the sad plain, broken by stretches of pasture-land where a few scattered oxen look uneasily at the unusual sight of a passing boat. Here and there a hut is silhouetted against the sky; a flock of ravens fly up, startled by a herd of horses that comes down to drink.

“Desolate and solemn is the beauty of this sad landscape—sad but ever wonderful in the glory of the transparent light which clothes it, flooding it from the glorious blue vault overhead where larks sing to where the horizon melts in a veil of pearly vapour.

“On the right bank appear the first maritime pines and tamarisks, heralds of the sea, though we are still seven miles from the mouth. But the sea was here at a time not so very remote in the earth’s history. At the close of the geological movement that raised the level of the Campagna, the mouth of the Tiber must have been near Ponte Galera, where its ancient bed opens towards the sea. In the time of King Ancus Martius, who founded Ostia twenty-five centuries ago, this mouth was already three and a half miles farther down. Under Claudius the harbour of Ostia had become useless, and it was then that the western arm of the river, called the Fiumicino



PONTE MILVIO FROM VILLA MADAMA.



THE TIBER AT CASTEL GIUBILEO.



O. Carlandi.

A LITTLE TOWN ON THE TIBER.



O. Carlandi.

THE TIBER AT VILLA GLORIA.

The Mouth of the Tiber

(the Little River) was opened, and along it was built the Port of Claudius, and later the Port of Trajan. At that time the low lands at Ostia and Maccarese were not cut off from the sea by sandhills and their salt-water lagoons were quite healthy. To-day, after eighteen centuries, these ports are buried, and the lagoons of Ostia and Maccarese are two miles from the sea and have become stagnant ponds lying at sea-level or below it. The land at the mouth of the river, which is now seven miles from Ponte Galera, advances at the rate of two yards a year, an advance that is more rapid on the right bank than on the left.

“Standing on the bank, one looks across undulating pasture-land, starred with asphodels, to the swamps of Ostia and Maccarese, which are overgrown with treacherous grasses. The form of the land shows that in old days the surface must have been lower than at the present and even more difficult to drain; but then there was a numerous population to cope with the natural disadvantages and to keep clear the channels which carried off the stagnant water, the producer of unhealthiness.”

At Capo Due Rami (Cape of the Two Branches) we reach the delta of the Tiber, where the waters divide; to the left, the river proper, the “Fiumare Grande,” as it is called, flows past Ostia to the sea by a channel that is not navigable. To the right, the “Fiumicino,” sometimes called Fossa Trajana (“Trajan’s Ditch”), passes the port of Fiumicino, from whence small ships with cargoes of wine and sulphur from Sicily and marble from Carrara sail up the river to Ripagrande, the port of Rome.

Between the two branches lies the Isola Sacra, haunted in spring by herons, the grazing-ground for herds of cattle; it is united to Fiumicino by a bridge of boats

The Roman Campagna

and to Ostia by a ferry capable of carrying carts and carriages, as well as passengers.

Our early forefathers erected temples and altars where confluents met and where the waters from the heights mingled with the purifying waters of the sea; for them these spots typified the unity of all things, and therefore they held them sacred.

The port of Fiumicino consists of a few houses and stores built along the Fossa Trajana. The inhabitants forsake it in summer, and sleep in boats anchored well out from the shore to avoid the malaria. The canal is always full of ships, for there is a good deal of trade still, though it is much fallen off from what it used to be.

The bustling port of Imperial Rome was half a mile farther up the river, at Porto, where Trajan built his great docks, the ruins of which fill one with wonder by their cyclopic dimensions. At first Porto was only an emporium dependent on Ostia; but necessarily people gathered there to superintend the shipping, and gradually it grew to be an independent city with many inhabitants.

After the Gothic invasion, Porto almost disappears from history for two centuries, the only record of it during that period being the names of some of the bishops of the Church; even in the *Peutingeriana* map we search in vain for its name, though we find an informal plan of its harbour, which leads us to think that it must have been accessible to ships.

"I have no doubt," says Tomassetti, "that the city, reduced to a simple military post during the Gothic war when commerce failed, was abandoned by most of its inhabitants, and only a small garrison was left to guard the river mouth. The fierce devastations of the Longobards and the incursions of Saracen pirates who



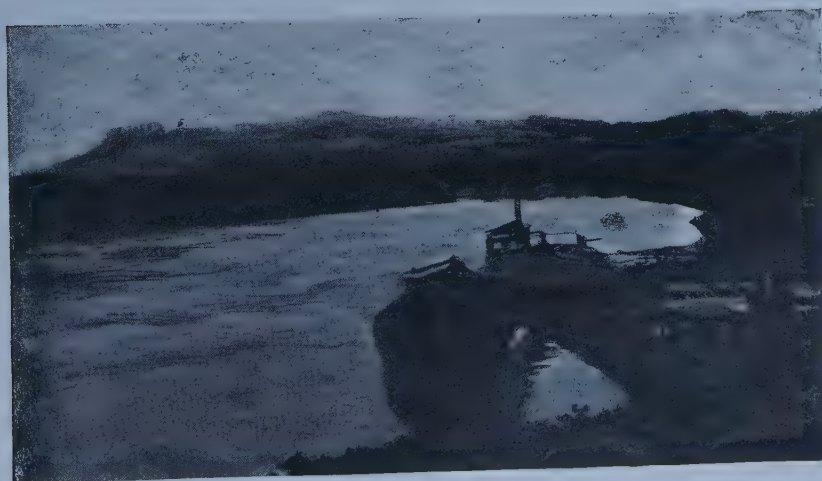
M. Barricelli.

THE TIBER AT GROTTA ROSSE.



O. Carlandi.

UNDER SORACTE.



M. Barricelli.

THE UPPER TIBER.



O. Carlandi.

THE TIBER AT STIMIGLIANO.



CATTLE ON THE SANDBANKS OF THE TIBER.



THE CREMERA.



THE ANIO AT LUNGHEZZA.



THE ANIO.



G. A. Sartorio.

HERD OF HORSES ON THE BANKS OF THE ANIO.

The Mouth of the Tiber

then infested the Mediterranean contributed to prevent any return of prosperity. The lack of inhabitants led to the neglect of the port, and I am convinced that some damage to the pier that divided the basin from the Tiber resulted in the water of the river overflowing into the harbour and filling it with sand, so that it became useless." This idea, which is put forward hypothetically, is confirmed by the silence of all records and documents of the sixth and seventh centuries, where no mention is made of the port, and we know that in the ninth century it was completely abandoned. "What is said of the port and of the neighbouring city does not, however, apply to the churches, which were kept in order by the faithful. The campanile of the old cathedral of the town, dedicated to S. Ippolito, the famous bishop of Porto and native of the place, still stands on the Isola Sacra; its architecture shows great affinity with that of the churches of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, S. Maria Nuova, and S. Maria in Cosmedin in Rome, all works of the eighth century.

The devastations of the Barbarians continued all through the ninth century, now in one region, now in another, according as they were attracted by greater riches or encouraged by less resistance. Their raids were not, however, always successful. Anastasio Bibliotecario, in his "Life of Leo IV.," gives the history of one raid of which he was an eye-witness. "The Saracens, who had appeared off Toxar, near the island of Sardinia, prepared to land at Porto, but when notice was given of their arrival the combined fleets of the Neapolitans, Amalfitani, and Gaetani hastened to help the Romans, and advancing to meet the Barbarians attacked them fiercely; a tremendous storm sprang up, which put an end to the battle, but it prevented the enemy approaching the coast; their ships were

The Roman Campagna

scattered and a great many were wrecked on the islands of Ponza, where the sailors were taken prisoners by the inhabitants. Some of the prisoners were sent to Rome, others were, by order of the magistrates, hanged at Porto. The rest were kept as slaves." Raphael has immortalised this defeat of the Saracens near Ostia in his famous fresco in the Vatican.

Porto is a malaria-stricken place ; a celebrated novelist sends his pale heroine there in search of death ; an hour passed in that dangerous air is enough to give her a fever which proves fatal. The fate which was sought by the unhappy girl comes unsought to hundreds of the inhabitants, who were, until lately, quite cut off from any medical aid.

Below Capo Due Rami the left branch of the river is wide and at first runs with a strong current, but after a few hundred yards it grows slower and as it approaches its mouth it becomes almost stagnant. We are now at sea-level, and the shining Tyrrhenian stretches away to the horizon.

The village of Ostia consists of a few houses and a number of huts clustered round the imposing castle built by Sangallo. A recent writer says of them that they do not differ much from those of a native village in the wilds of Abyssinia. Near the village there is a colony of Ravenesi, who have undertaken the redemption of the land and whose houses are built on the same plan as those of Northern Italy. They are the hardy pioneers of a work which is as yet in its infancy.

After the destruction of Ficana, Ostia was founded by the kings of Rome, and was the first, and for many centuries, the only port of the city. Dionysius relates the story of its foundations as follows :—



M. Barricelli.

THE TIBER TO THE NORTH OF ROME.



WHERE THE ANIO DIVIDES ABOVE TIVOLI.



ON THE ANIO.



B. Croatto.

PONTE NOMENTANA.

The Mouth of the Tiber

“The Tiber, which flows past Rome from the Apennines, was of very little use to the city, since at its mouth on the inhospitable shore there was no harbour or any facility for the lading or unlading of merchandise either from sea-going ships or river boats. The river, however, is navigable, and quite large cargo boats can row down it from its source, and ships can sail up from the sea as far as Rome. Therefore Ancus Martius decided to build a harbour at its mouth, because, where the river joins the sea, it widens out and forms a broad bay like those of the best maritime ports. The Tiber is always accessible to ships, for its waters cut their way through the breakers, and however strongly the west wind may blow galleys and merchantmen can enter the mouth and ascend as far as Rome, propelled by rowing or by towing. The larger sailing vessels remain anchored in the sea and boats bring their cargo ashore.”

Ancient Ostia had as many as 100,000 inhabitants; now, including the colonists from Ravenna, they number a bare 400. The ruins of the ancient city with its baths and theatres speak of the luxury of the merchant princes, and from these ruins we can evoke a picture of the life of the old port with its crowd of sailors and porters.

The old road to the town, lined with sepulchres and paved with polygon stones, can be traced, and a sarcophagus bearing an inscription to an Ostian decurion lies by the way. Close to the gate are the walls of Gregoriopolis, and a little farther on are the ruins of a large, private house with a peristylum bordered with tufa columns; farther still is the portico which surrounded the Forum of Ceres, in the centre of which are the remains of a temple built in the style called “in antis.”

Behind the Forum is the theatre. It was built under Augustus, restored by Hadrian, completely rebuilt by

The Roman Campagna

Septimus Severus and Caracalla and again restored by Honorius. Close by is the Mithraic temple, paved with black and white mosaics, and with all the arrangements for the sacred rites perfectly preserved.

Another great open space is Vulcan's Forum, originally surrounded on three sides by a portico; the great temple of the god which towers up at one side is architecturally very fine.

The street that passes the temple leads to the Laurentian Gate, where there are some remains of the Metrone, the vegetable market, and of the Sacred Field before the temple of Cybele. The baths are in the other direction, near the Tiber, and in them the caldarium and the piscinæ are still clearly traceable.

Between the temple of Vulcan and the river is the Imperial Palace, decorated by Corinthian columns of granite; it was at first thought that these were the ruins of baths, but an inscription has come to light which proves them to be the remains of the Palace of Commodus. The mosaics of the floors are most remarkable, especially one which represents a labyrinth. To the west of the palace lay the arsenal built by Caius Marcus Censorinus, prætor of Ostia, and beyond some farther ruins the Emporium is reached, where there is a room filled with enormous jars half-buried in the ground.

Tacitus says that under Nero Ostia was rich and populous, and he relates how, after the fatal fire whereby Rome was almost destroyed, Cæsar sent to Ostia and the neighbouring municipalities for the tools and the materials wherewith to repair the incalculable damage caused by the disaster.

Christianity early reached this seaport and it was the first of the suburban cities to have a bishop. From this

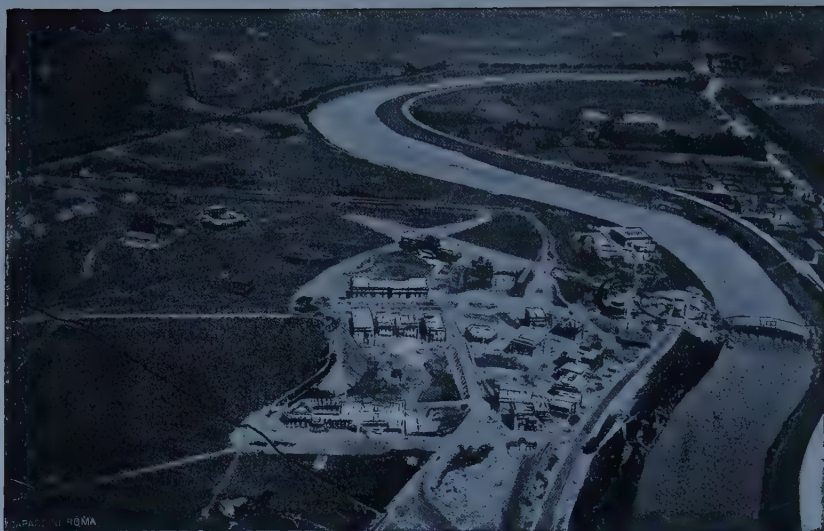


THE ANIO, NEAR ITS MOUTH.



B. Croatto.

THE TIBER AT THE MOUTH OF THE ANIO.



THE TIBER.
From an airship.



THE TIBER AT ACQUACETOSA.



O. Carlandi.

MOUTH OF THE TIBER : MAIN STREAM.



B. Croatta.

THE PINE WOOD AT CASTEL FUSANO.

The Mouth of the Tiber

circumstance arose the custom, which dates from earliest times, that the Bishop of Ostia should consecrate the new pope.

The author of "The Gothic War" gives us a sad picture of the effects of the first Barbarian invasions on Ostia. "To the left, at the other mouth of the Tiber, is Ostia, a town once flourishing and important, but of which the walls are now thrown down . . . the road from Ostia to Rome is overgrown and terribly neglected, and it does not even run by the bank of the Tiber, there being no traffic on the river."

So in the sixth century, when this was written, Ostia was already in ruins and its aspect even then was much the same as it is now, therefore its ruin must have begun in the fifth century. It must be noted, however, that Procopius in the same passage says that at Ostia the mouth of the river was accessible and "the Tiber is navigable in both branches."

That the city was early forsaken by its inhabitants can be gathered from its ruins, for, as Tomassetti remarks, no edifices of a later date than the third century are found amongst them, and even the church of S. Ercolano, outside the walls of the ancient city, is prior to the fifth century.

If Ostia was already so deserted in the sixth century, it is no wonder that in the succeeding centuries, a troublous period for this part of Italy, it fell into a state of misery and squalor.

The plundering incursions of the Saracens so depopulated it that Gregory IV., in order to save the few inhabitants who still lingered there, built a new village farther inland, close to the site of the present village of Ostia, calling it after himself, Gregoriopolis.

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Between Ostia and the sea, after passing Tor Bovacciana, the ground to the left is covered by brushwood right down to the shore. Amidst this undergrowth, about a mile from the mouth of the river, surrounded by stagnant water, is an octagonal tower which, according to an inscription over the door, was erected by Pius V. in the year 1569 for the defence of the coast. This white tower is now at a considerable distance from the sea, and stands a useless, solitary beacon in the shrub-grown waste.

The waves wash incessantly against the skeletons of boats which have found their grave in these sands. In the weird solitude of that gloomy shore, *importuosum litus*, the mouth of the Tiber is tragic in its aspect; it is like the estuary of an African river flowing into the sea unseen by human eye, under an unfriendly sky. In the middle of it is a little island, thickly covered with tall birches. The sluggish current advances with slow majesty, and the view looking up it towards the marshy plain, with the ruins of Ostia rising at the bend of the river like a group of bleached skeletons, is most impressive.

The flat shore extends north and south, broken only by tomb-like hillocks, bounded on one side by pine woods and on the other by the white line of the breaking waves.



THE TIBER AND THE PALACE OF JUSTICE.

From an airship.



THE TIBER.

From an airship.



O. Carlandi.

PONTE FABRICIO AND TORRE ANICIA.



ROME AND THE TIBER.

From an airship.

CHAPTER X

THE SHORE

As we pass through the Tiber Delta, tufts of sea myrtle and tamarisks announce the neighbourhood of the sea, and the effect of its powerful breath is seen in the twisted growth of the stone pines and eucalyptus-trees which are all bent in one direction by the south-west wind.

I believe very few shores in the world can equal the deserted Latin coast in gloomy sadness. It is varied by a series of curving bays and silent promontories from Torre di Montalto on the Etruscan border to Torre Olevola near Monte Circeo, but everywhere there is the same impression of lonely wildness. No boat on the inhospitable sea, no voice of man on the shore, nothing but heaps of seaweed and fragments of the masts of ships, half-buried in the sandy hollows; one after the other rise the gloomy ruins of the towers erected in the Middle Ages to watch for the approach of pirates, dark stone monuments deserted save by the ravens which circle round their summits.

The coast appears interminable in its desolation and the moaning waves seem to beat upon the shores of an unknown continent wholly abandoned to wind and storm, frequented only by the sea birds which soar high over its waves.

For nearly its whole length, about 130 miles, the beach

The Roman Campagna

is bounded by a wide marshy zone, Maccarese and Ostia to the north and the Pontine Marshes to the south. It is separated from these Marshes by hillocks of sand, tomb-like in shape and of a peculiarly desolate aspect, and which extend all along the coast.

From Capo d'Anzio to Monte Circeo, a distance of about twenty-five miles, the old coast-line rises to a considerable height at some distance from the sea, and between this height and the line of sandhills lies a marshy hollow interspersed with ponds, some of which, such as those of Fogliano and Pola, are both long and deep. This old coast-line is a continuation of the Roman tableland, and the wide swampy region which separates it from the sea is known as the Pontine Marshes ; these Marshes run along the base of the Monti Lepini and have only one outlet and that a very hampered one at their southern extremity, near Terracina.

The pond or swamp of Maccarese lies to the north of the Tiber, behind the barrier of sand that the winds and the waves have built between it and the sea. It permanently covers an area of nine hundred acres, an area that is increased to four thousand five hundred acres in the rainy season.

The dampness of the soil in this region produces a thick growth of vegetation, beautiful to look at, but malaria lurks like a serpent beneath the leaves. Aquatic shrubs grow with tropical luxuriance, and water-lilies and ranunculi cover the still sheets of water with a marvellous tissue of yellow plumes and ivory cups.

There is something symbolic in this unexpected contrast between the magic, poisonous beauty and fertility of the marsh and the honest, arid poverty of the Agro !

Hydraulic pumps have been erected here, and by their



O. Carlandi.

THE TIBER ISLAND.



AT THE MOUTH OF THE "FIUMICINO."



O. Carlandi.

ON THE TIBER.



O. Carlandi.

LOWER TIBER.



O. Carlandi.

REMAINS OF THE LAKE OF PORTO.



O. Carlandi.

TOR BOVACCIANA.



O. Carlandi.

REMAINS OF THE SEA-BATHS AT OSTIA.



THE CASTLE OF OSTIA.



G. A. Sartorio.

THE FERRY AT OSTIA.

The Shore

means part of the land has been redeemed, but they have not yet succeeded in conquering the unhealthiness of the district.

Wherever the marsh gives place to firmer soil, splendid pine forests once extended from the Etruscan Maremma to the borders of Campania, the trees rising high above an undergrowth of laurel ; portions of them still remain on the Tuscan shore, and remnants are to be found on the Latin coast at Maccarese, at Ostia, at Anzio, at Astura, and at Sperlonga.

On the Isola Sacra and to the south of the mouth of the Tiber groups of fishermen may occasionally be seen drawing in their nets. They are only visitors to this region where all life seems to be an incessant wandering of homeless, unknown beings. These fishermen land, camp under a tent made of the sail of their boat, light a fire, sleep, and start off again, leaving behind them a heap of ashes and some broad footprints in the sand.

Isola Sacra is partly cultivated, but much the greater part of it is pasture-land where cattle graze on the hardy, bluish grass, the only produce of the soil where once roses and other fragrant flowers grew in such abundance that it bore the name of “*libanus almæ Veneris*.”

Not far south of Ostia stands Castel Fusano, which was erected in the sixteenth century by the Chigi family in the healthy pine forest where the salt sea-breezes mingle with the ozone of the firs.

A fine avenue, paved with polygon stones of lava taken from the old Via Severiana, leads from the castle down to the sea ; along this avenue, mile-stones mark eight Roman miles from the house to the sandhills of the Laurentian shore.

The castle was built in the eighteenth century, and as

The Roman Campagna

there was still danger from barbaric incursions, it was built with a view to defence; at the corners there are turrets with loopholes and barbicans, and the staircase is only wide enough to admit of the passage of one person at a time.

The name Fusano is by no means of modern origin; it occurs in a Bull of Gregory VII. whereby he confirmed the gift of the land to the basilica of S. Paul in 1074; it is derived from the Fusiana, a tribe that were later called Furiani, who had property in this neighbourhood and gave to it the name of Fusianum. This property was so extensive that it formed a "massa," which, according to the above-mentioned Bull, was given by Gregory VII. to S. Paul's "et massam Fusanam com omnibus suis pertinentis."

The secular maritime pines, that grow in clumps at Maccarese, at Castel Fusano form noble avenues along the fateful shore that witnessed the immigration of the Latin peoples, the shore where Æneas landed.

Did the laurel grow freely here in those days? The author of "Origo Gentis Romanæ," speaking of the landing of Æneas in Italy, says that he disembarked at "eam Italiæ oram, quæ ab arbusto eiusdem generis *Laurens* appellata est." Now however the laurel has almost disappeared from these shores, and while many other varieties of trees and shrubs grow profusely, it is rare; so that were it not that we know from descriptions given by writers and from representations of it in sculpture that the *laurus* of the Latins really corresponds to our laurel, doubts might arise as to the identity of the plant.

This district is covered with woods near the sea, but as we advance inland it is bare except for some clumps of brushwood. Seen from a height, it appears flat, but when we come to traverse it, we find that it is broken up into



O. Carlandi.

THE CASTLE OF OSTIA FROM THE MARSH.



RUINS OF OSTIA.



O. Carlandi.

MASQUES IN THE RUINS OF THE THEATRE OF OSTIA.



THE VIA ROMANA, OSTIA.

The Shore

a succession of little valleys, sometimes sloping gently and sometimes steep and rocky, generally bare or with a sparse growth of shrubs. These valleys are due to the action of the small streams which have carved a way for themselves towards the Tiber, or to the sea, from which the district is separated by the usual line of sand hills.

Although the land at the mouth of the Tiber has advanced more than three miles, farther south, at Lavinio and Ardea, there has been little increase, and as the vegetation, which becomes more luxuriant as we go inland, is the natural growth of the soil, we may conclude that the aspect of this coast has not changed much since the time, when Æneas first viewed it.

As well as a district, a town bore the name of Laurentium, a very ancient city which was at one time the metropolis of the Aborigines and of the Latin tribes. Nibby says of it: "When the Aborigines, in alliance with the Pelasgians, came down from the hills and drove out the Siculi from the plain where they had dwelt from time immemorial, Picus, their leader, said to be the son of Saturn, founded Laurentium not far from the sea, about eighty years before the fall of Troy. After a long reign, Picus was succeeded by his son Faunus, who by his wife Marcia had one son, Latinus, who in his turn succeeded to his father. He reigned in peace for many years, but then came the invasion of Æneas and his Phrygians. The Trojans landed near the mouth of the Tiber and camped on the left bank, on the spot where later Ancus Martius founded the colony of Ostia. Latinus and his people did not welcome the invaders and refused them any help, so that Æneas was obliged to resort to force to obtain provisions. He scoured the country, plundering right and left; naturally the inhabitants objected, and thus war raged between the invading

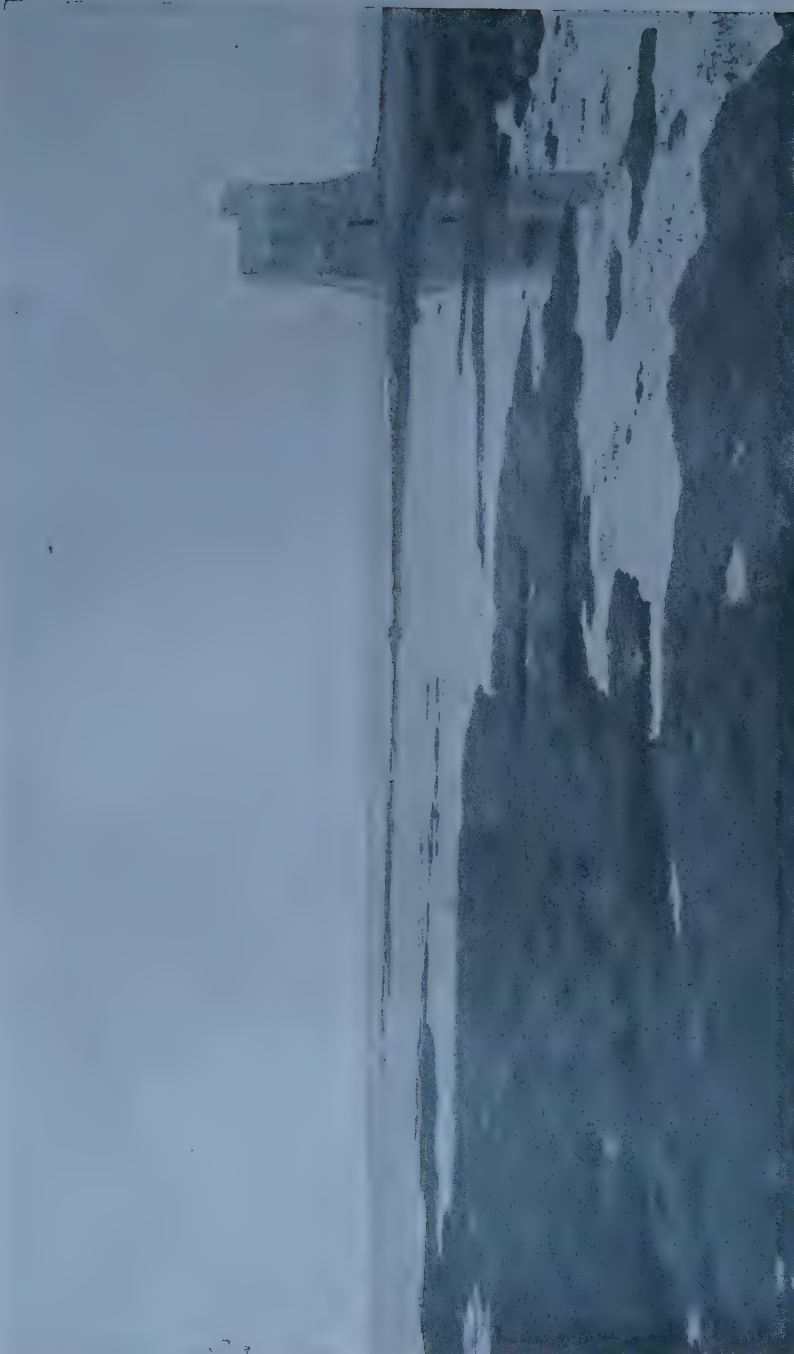
The Roman Campagna

Phrygians and the native tribes, especially the Laurentians and their neighbours the Rutuli."

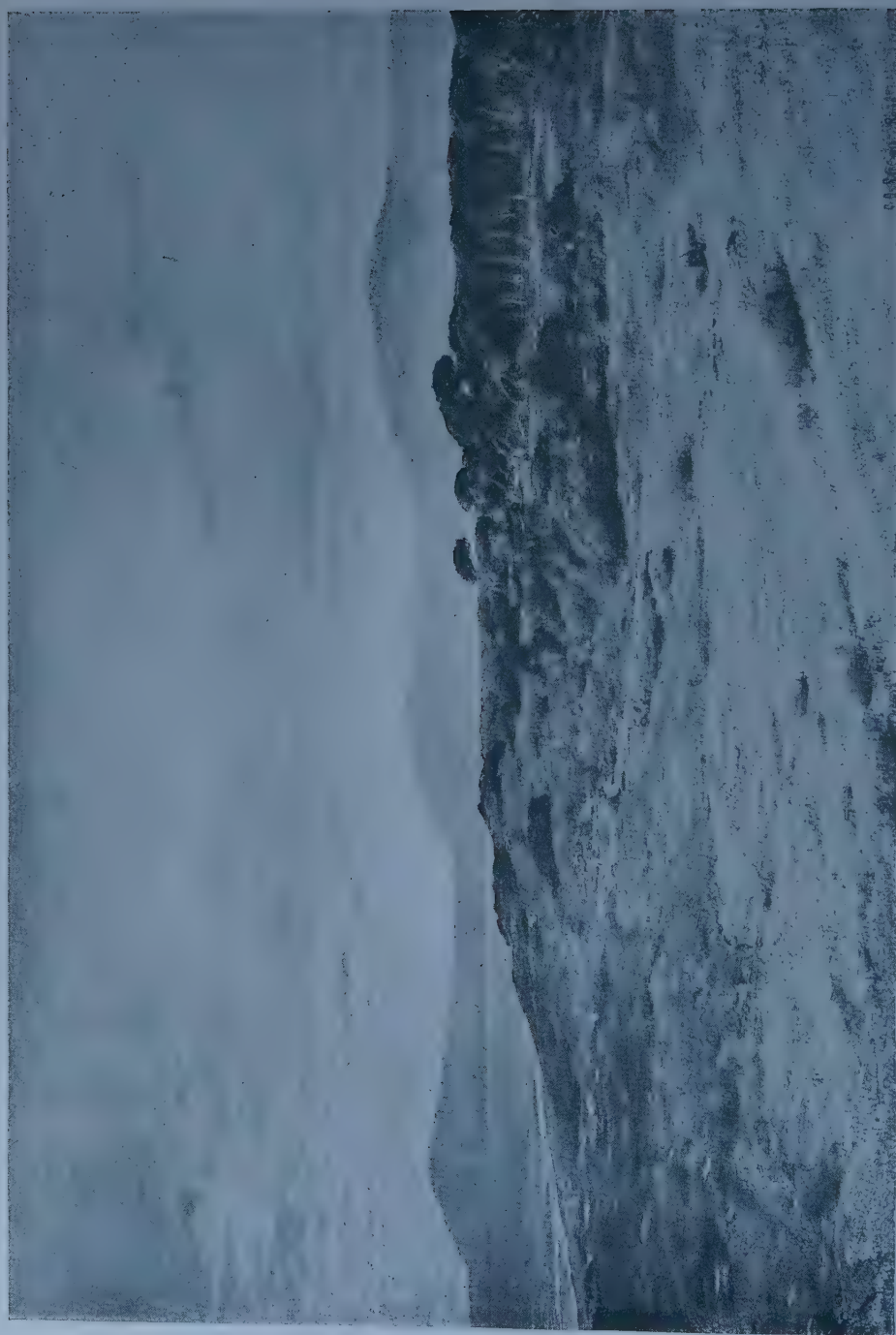
From the accounts given by Dionysius, Livy, Aurelius Victor and Virgil, who in their turn drew their information from still older sources, we gather that, after some skirmishes, Æneas must have made a treaty with Latinus; the hill of Pratica was assigned to him as a dwelling-place, and he married Lavinia, daughter and heiress of Latinus, who had no sons. From her the city of Lavinium took its name. It was the religious metropolis of the Latins even after Alba Longa had become the political capital, but its religious importance did not prevent it dwindling. Laurentium also decreased, till at last the two cities were united under the name of Laurus-Lavinium. A few fragments in the grass-grown plain are all that remain of these cities.

Not far from Laurentium was the temple and the fountain sacred to Anna Perenna, sister of the betrayed Dido. Here there was a grove sacred to the local deity Indigetes, with another temple dedicated to Venus, and near by was the tomb of Æneas, who was deified. The waters of the river Numicio were sacred and might only be used by the Vestal virgins in the sacrifices to the great goddess, and the district became the centre of the worship of the pastoral divinities: Picus, Faunus, Jupiter, all had temples dedicated to them on this Latin shore.

Beyond the Laurentine forest the coast stretches in monotonous desolation between the inhospitable sea and the wild land; the brown watch towers rise like mile-stones: dismantled Tor Paterno, Torre Vajanica, Torre S. Anastasia, Tor Caldara, Torre di Marangone, Torre Flavia. The oldest of these towers date from the eighth and ninth centuries; they were almost all erected as a defence against the Saracens and even now are called



TORRE FLAVIA.



G. A. Sarfario.

THE MARITIME PINE FOREST AT TORRE ASTURA.



ISOLA SACRA.



MAIN CHANNEL OF THE TIBER, NEAR ITS MOUTH.



O. Carlandi

A BANK OF THE TIBER.



ZAPACCHINI ROMA

THE MARITIME FOREST.

The Shore

Saracen towers. For many centuries they were maintained by the lords of the land.

The most important of them were lofty, solid structures, surrounded by a walled enclosure; the watchman was protected by a turret, and generally there was an alarm bell which he could ring at the first sign of the enemy.

In the seventeenth century not a few of these towers were restored and some new ones were built, amongst them Tor San Lorenzo, which is nearly 90 feet high and 40 feet square, with four subterranean vaults, a parade ground, and lodging for thirty people. The Torre San Michele, on the shore near Ostia, was designed by Michael Angelo.

The Apostolic Chamber had the towers of the Latin shore, from Terracina to Porto Ercole, a distance of 160 miles, under its surveillance, and we find records of constant orders being given for their repair and maintenance.

Tor Bovacciana has a rather varied history; it was first the lighthouse of the harbour of Ostia; then it became a Saracen tower; afterwards a baronial stronghold; then the semaphore of the Papal fort at Ostia; now it is a peasant's house.

The round, white tower of Caldara stands on a sandstone rock, at the foot of which there is an iron spring. After it the waving woods of Nettuno and Anzio come in sight.

The view here, as one issues from the wood through which the road passes, is magnificent; to the west is Capo d'Anzio, to the east the island of Astura, just separated from the mainland, and farther off the lofty peninsula of Monte Circeo, amethyst on the azure waters. The shore here is bordered by sandstone cliffs.

The Roman Campagna

Anzio was in Imperial times a great and flourishing city, where Nero built splendid temples and villas and a noble port, but it was despoiled of its riches and fell into decay early in our era. But what treasures of art must lie buried under its soil!

There are but few remains of ancient Anzio, and what there are, are principally parts of the pier and of Imperial villas. Of the ancient Volscian city all that is visible is a piece of wall at a place called the Vignacce, built of irregular quadrilateral blocks of the local tufa. They prove that the primitive city lay towards Nettuno on the cliffs, a position easily defended against attack from the sea. The Roman city was built farther inland, and the shore was occupied by villas much as it is now; a modern villa stands on the site of the Temple of Fortune.

Nero's villa must have been of great extent, for to the west of the town there is a series of arches which formed part of it, and which extend as far as the point of the cape, apparently belonging to a passage through the rocks; it goes by the name of "arco muto." Farther up the cliff we come on the remains of the baths, a hall with four niches, and the pipes of the aqueduct, still plainly visible, and it was here that, in the time of Julius II., the statue of the Apollo Belvedere was found and, a century later, Borghese Gladiator.

The numerous caverns along the coast were quarries from whence the building material for the town was extracted.

A short walk along a fine road brings us to Nettuno; many ruins and fragments of mosaic pavements scattered by the way show how numerous were the inhabitants in old days.

At Nettuno the sandstone cliff has been hollowed out,



TORRE PALIDORO.



TOR PAGLIACCETTO, NEAR PALIDORO.



TOR CALDARA, NEAR ANZIO.



VIA LAURENTINA.



REMAINS OF NERO'S VILLA AT ANZIO.



TORRE MARANGONE.

The Shore

leaving supporting columns of rock which give it the appearance of a fortified town—an appearance which is increased by the mediæval walls and circular turrets.

Tradition says that the inhabitants of Nettuno are of Saracen origin, and the dress of the women and their way of wearing their hair are distinctly Oriental, thus confirming the theory that they are the descendants of a Saracen colony.

Between Nettuno and Astura, that little island of tragic memories whose castle dominates the wide bay, the coast is deserted, and bordered by gloomy thickets of brushwood. But this solitude and sadness serve to increase the poetry of the ruins scattered everywhere.

All this district was the resort of luxurious pleasure-seekers, and the remains of a wonderful villa show a little of what the life was when tired Romans sought the refreshment of the sea-breezes. A semi-circular terrace rises from the water, the ground floor of which was a bathing establishment into which the sea-water was admitted by sluices and from which it was carried off by a canal under another rectangular terrace that jutted still further into the sea. Behind the hemicycle is a corridor, still half buried, so beautifully decorated with stucco of such fine workmanship that it recalls the few remaining fragments at Hadrian's Villa. Not very far away are other ruins that have been identified as the bathing establishment of another villa; the seats, the arrangements for letting the water out and in, and an esedra, are all clearly visible, as well as other ruins.

Beyond these there is no further sign of human life, no trace of the revellers of Pagan days.

For miles along the shore by the moaning sea which beats relentlessly on the sand hills, building them higher

The Roman Campagna

day by day, there are stretches of thick, dark woods, and amongst them rise the stern watch towers like gloomy sentinels. There is something almost fierce in the sadness of this land, the silence of which is broken only by the roar of the sea. Here Nature wears no mask of smiling fertility; she is the implacable destroyer of the works of man, giving nothing and taking all.

Torre Astura is built on piles of old masonry which are supposed to have belonged to the villa which Cicero owned on this little island. Probably the island was then united to the mainland by a mole, as it is now.

The name Astura comes from Astur, a bird of the falcon family. Nothing is known of the castle until the end of the tenth century, when it appears as a stronghold belonging to the monastery of S. Alessio. It became famous in 1270 as the scene of the treacherous betrayal of the youthful Corradino of the Hohenstaufens by Jacopo Frangipane. Corradino was executed by Charles of Anjou at Naples, but vengeance followed, for eighteen years afterwards the Sicilians under Bernardo di Saviniano attacked Torre Astura and captured it.

As well as the tower where Corradino was arrested, which shows signs of having been restored in the fifteenth century, there are remains of old constructions under the level of the water, and the modern bridge is built on some of these remains.

From my Note-book.—“On the coast, along the melancholy shore, solitude reigns, and Nature throws a mantle of vegetation around it. Groves of oaks and wild olives skirt the dunes, and, as the sea-breeze passes, the silvery back of the olive leaves shimmer in the sun like a sudden gleam of blossom. Between the forest and the sands grow tufts of myrtle, filling the air with its pungent scent.



THE TOWER OF FIUMICINO.



THE TOWER OF MACCARESE.



WALLS OF NETTUNO.



VIEW OF NETTUNO.



OLD FORTRESS OF NETTUNO.



WOMEN OF NETTUNO.



GROTTO OF CIRCE : TORRE DEL FICO ON THE HEIGHT.



WANDERING FISHERMEN : DINNER.

The Shore

“One little bay succeeds another, and during my walk of many hours over promontory after promontory along the curving coast I have seen only three human beings; in the morning a muleteer with a long string of horses bringing sacks of charcoal from the charcoal-burners’ camp to the sea, and, later, two shepherds with their flocks. My only companion is silence, the mysterious silence of the Campagna, the silence of the most tragic landscape in the world.

“The irregular thickets of oak and birch which skirt the sea behind the dunes now give place to a pine forest, and the stretch of sand is wider. Little hidden bays open to the sea, and ever the solitude continues.

“At last, from behind a sandhill, not far from my goal, Torre Astura, a column of smoke curls into the air.

“Who can they be who have lighted a fire here? A few more steps on the soft sand and I look down on a group of fishermen and their two boats, one of which is already beached while the other is being dragged up.

“They are the usual nomadic fishermen, the only explorers of this coast.

“Some of them are already seated round the fire, where a cauldron of polenta is being cooked, to be eaten presently with the fresh fish which are turning their last somersaults in the frying-pan.

“So these men live; wherever night overtakes them they camp, make a tent of their sail on the sand, or sleep on their boat under the stars until the pearly light of rosy-fingered dawn flushes the sea, whose murmuring waves call them to another day’s work; then they set off once more in their boat, which is their home, their fortune, their world.

“Probably these men, with their wandering craft, are

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the descendants of those sailors who handled the helm and the sheet on board the ship of Ulysses. They are Campanians, and their clear-cut, straight profiles show their Hellenic ancestry, a regularity of feature that is as marked in the wrinkled faces of the old as of the young men.

“They become aware of my presence and hospitably invite me to sit down by the fire and share their meal. They call me ‘*Excellenza*,’ according to the Southern custom, and they tell me the simple, humble facts of their hard life—of the fever that attacks them on certain shores, of the difficulty they have in landing when the sea is angry and the shore inhospitable.

“One of the boats is being pushed off; it is going round the island of Astura and past the tower of Foce Verde, to anchor for the night in the neighbourhood of the lake of Fogliano. I ask to be taken on board, a request that is courteously granted, and the large sail, embroidered with many patches, is unfurled to the north-west wind and the old boat, full of ropes and nets, tacks along the level shore, where rocky bays alternate with stretches of level sand. Sometimes the cliffs rise perpendicularly, looking like an irregularly built wall.

“From afar a shimmer of thick green vegetation can be seen round Foce Verde. I know the meaning of this treacherous fertility, it is produced by the insanitary ponds of the Pontine Marshes.

“Beyond the dunes a higher bank sometimes rises, covered with oaks; the landscape, seen from the sea, is exceedingly melancholy. Even the fishermen seem to be affected by it, for the song which they had begun to sing while unfurling their sail, a Neapolitan song full of light and joy, sinks into silence, and they devote themselves to

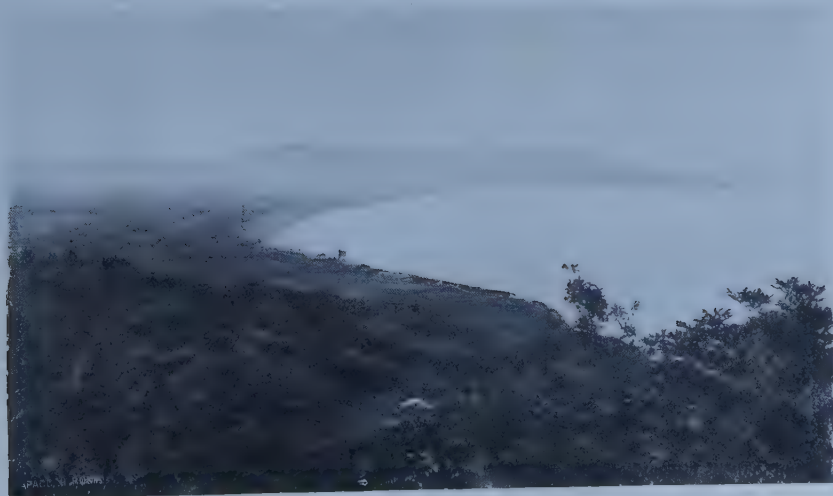


G. A. Sartorio.

SANDS NEAR LAKE PAOLA : CIRCEO IN THE DISTANCE.



BETWEEN THE LAKES OF FOGLIANO AND MONACI.

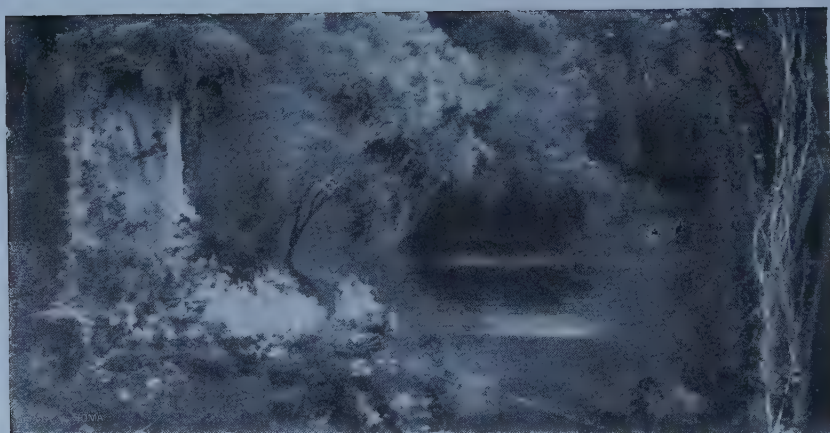


GULF OF TERRACINA, FROM CIRCEO.



G. A. Sanlorio.

IN THE MARSHES



E. Serra.

A FORGOTTEN MARSH.

The Shore

guiding their craft. Are they thinking with longing of their sunny native shores at Formia and Sorrento? This coast is too fiercely desolate, too silent and solitary, too different from these smiling bays, where palms and orange groves mingle with olives and laurels.

"The brown tower of Fogliano is now in sight; the little craft will be moored near it in readiness for the next day's work.

"I shall sleep in a cottage and at dawn shall start on my forty miles' ride to Terracina, following the top of the dunes that lie between the sea and the brackish lakes which once were part of it. . . .

"The lakes of Fogliano, Monaci, Caprolace, and Paolo form a series of maritime lagoons divided from the sea by sandbanks that sometimes reach the height of thirty or forty feet.

"The lake of Fogliano lies surrounded by yellow sandbanks and green reeds, and its waters are as smiling and as blue as the sky they reflect, but on every side the putrid ditches and the dark slimy water of the stagnant canals show the deadly nature of this pestilential region. I shall some day explore all these canals to their sources in the midst of the Marshes, but to-day I shall ride by the coast-line to their southern extremity near Terracina.

"The horse I am to ride is ready and awaits me, with its hard saddle and its iron breast-plate, and my guide is already mounted, his leather hat-strap under his chin.

"Beyond the tower of Fogliano and the short canal which unites the lake to the sea, the sandbanks skirt the great western forest of the Marshes. The woods of the Pontine Marshes may be said to be divided into

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two immense forests—the eastern one which stretches as far as the Monti Lepini, and the western which extends along the shore and is the larger of the two. The trees are principally oak, cork, and ash. The moisture of the soil so favours the growth of parasitic plants that these woods are almost everywhere impassable, and can only be traversed by the canals that join the lakes to one another and which run parallel to the sea. Riding along the sandhills I catch glimpses through the foliage of the gloomy waters of the canal leading from Fogliano to the little round lake of Monaci.

“Suddenly, not far from us, there is a dull noise as of some heavy body falling on the leaves, an ominous grunt, the crash of some bulky animal forcing its way through the undergrowth.

“‘A wild boar!’ exclaims my guide. This wood swarms with them; boars and wolves contend with buffaloes, goats, and horses for the possession of this inaccessible forest.

“This forest, of which I cannot see the end, lies partly in the damp, low ground and partly on inland sandhills, some of which rise to the height of more than sixty feet. Through it there run not only the lakes, but a deep trench, the making of which is ascribed to Martin V., so deep that the crests of the large trees that grow in it do not reach the top.

“The lakes interrupt the forest with their irregularly shaped sheets of water; here, less than half a mile from Fogliano, is Lake Monaci, a shallow basin surrounded by ferns and reeds. A straight ditch, three-quarters of a mile long, leads to the lance-shaped lake of Caprolace, shaded by thick oaks.

“All these lagoons are very shallow, six or at



STAGNANT WATER BETWEEN CISTERNA AND FOGLIANO.



E. Coleman.

CART DRAWN BY BUFFALOES ON AN ANCIENT ROAD.



"AS FLAT AS A BILLIARD-TABLE."



"BUTTERI" AT CISTERNA.



G. A. Safford.

FLOCKS ON THE PONTINE SHORE.



AN ENCAMPMENT IN THE MARSH OF TERRACINA.

The Shore

the most nine feet deep, with miry bottoms. My guide says that Caprolace is very treacherous, for though the water is shallow the mire in the bottom is deep. 'Do you see that spot?' he says, pointing to a kind of bay in the mudbank; 'some time ago two buffaloes that were drawing a cart were so thirsty—it was summer-time—that they rushed into the lake to drink. When their driver saw he could not stop them, he jumped out of the cart, just in time, for in less than five minutes cart and buffaloes had been swallowed up in the mire. In this spot a pole thirty feet long can be driven into the mud without touching solid bottom; and if one of our horses were to shy,' he adds consolingly, 'we should scarcely have time to say goodbye to the sunshine.'

"The blue water sends up a foul smell; I have some difficulty in keeping my horse to the top of the dunes, which he would fain forsake for the edge of the sea.

"We now come to the last lake, Paola, the wildest and most solitary of all, whose shape reminds me of Lake Garda. Between it and the sea, to which it is joined by a canal at its southern extremity, the belt of sandbanks grow broader, and some of the hills rise to the height of sixty-five feet.

"What silence reigns over all the six miles of this lagoon! Some storks rise from its clumps of reeds, and on the sand of a small bay two herons stand motionless. Am I really on Latin soil and not in some desert of Egypt or of the unknown East?

"Opposite the southern extremity of Lake Paola a little bay forms a natural harbour, the only spot on this coast where it is possible for boats to anchor.

"And it was here that after his adventurous voyage wandering Ulysses landed in sight of the grotto of

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Circe; here Tiberius disembarked on his return from Astura; here the Saracens swooped down from their vessels to plunder the rich land round Terracina. The Tower of Paola held them at bay while the watchman rang the alarm bell wildly to warn Terracina of their approach. Now the tower on its high rock is a mere ruin; its square grey walls are overgrown by mint and the tendrils of climbing plants wave in the breeze while, with a shrill cry, a falcon rises and circles round as if guarding the old watch-tower.

“The sea between the two promontories beats monotonously on the sand and on the heaps of seaweed and driftwood, fragments of wrecked boats.

“But my horse bears me quickly on to the south, towards Monte Circeo, which rises boldly with its peaks clothed in green.

“The character of the shore suddenly changes. Is it not now kissed by the melodious sea of the syrens, and is not the air the ‘luminous ether’ of the poem of Ulysses?

“After the long sadness of the Maremma the eye drinks in with delight the view of the Bay of Terracina, with its sweet-smelling flowers and fruitful orchards: Terracina, smiled on by Venus and Pomona, mirrored in the sea of Homer and Virgil, the Paradise of Circe’s kingdom.”



CART-TRACK AT CARANO.



BUFFALOES IN AN ENCLOSURE AT CISTERNA.



A TYPICAL HUT OF THE MARSHES.



A POISONOUS BOG.



WOODCUTTER.

CHAPTER XI

THE PONTINE MARSHES

LONG before the days of Rome civilisation reached the shores of the Pontine Marshes. The small vessels that brought Greek Art to Parthenope sailed on past the Cumæan acropolis, mother of their Tyrrhenean colonies, and discovered the fine natural harbour of Terracina. Still on they sailed, beyond Monte Circeo, along the smiling coast, clad in those days with groves of laurel and pine. They landed on the broad fertile plain that lay between the sea and the mountains, contributing by their commerce to the prosperity of this territory whose history is so rich in fantastic contrasts of splendour and decay.

When early writers speak of the fertility of the Latin Land, we must not make the mistake of thinking that they refer to the plain in the vicinity of Rome, for there civilisation never rose above the elementary pastoral and agricultural stage. It is to the Pontine region that they refer. Here there were twenty populous cities, rich and flourishing and filled with art treasures, and in their temples the transformation of Greek gods into Latin divinities was gradually accomplished. Here also it is probable that the ancient Roman code of the twelve tables, derived from early Greek laws, took shape.

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On the plain lying south of the Latin, Ernician and Ausanian mountains, between Anzio and Cisterna to the north and Monte Circeo and Terracina to the south, lay the Volscian towns with their high polygon walls; here colonies of Samnites and Peloponnesians built cities, surrounding them with dry cyclopic fortifications like those of Tyrintum and Micene; here the Lacædemonians erected a temple and consecrated a wood to the goddess Feronia. The Volscians, lords of the mountains, ruled the whole district, and their capital, Suessa Pometia, now completely buried, was in the southern centre of the Marshes near Mesa. It has disappeared, together with Polusca, Longula, Privernum, Tripontes, and Circei, the rich and flourishing cities of which Anxur was the emporium. As the poet says, "Behold that endless valley that lies along the Tyrrhenean shore, it is the cemetery of twenty forgotten cities, it is the marsh which from Pontus takes its name."

The Via Appia runs through the whole district to Feronia at the foot of Monte Leano and on to Terracina.

Here, in an epoch that has not yet been sufficiently studied, the Volscian cities and Doric colonies came into daily contact, and a fusion of Mediterranean races took place as well as an initiation of arts and learning. A careful study of the evolution that took place in that period might furnish the key to the problem of the origin of the Italic people and the birth of Rome itself.

When the Greeks landed on the Pontine shore it was a pleasant land and perfectly healthy, and so it remained until the end of the Republican era. A study of the geological formation of the land proves that there were then no wide-spreading marshes amongst the fields and woods. The coast level was much higher than it is now, thus allowing the



HUTS AT CAMPO CERRETO.



HUTS ALONG A CART-TRACK.



INTERIOR OF A HUT IN THE MARSHES.



ANOTHER INTERIOR.



LITTLE "GUITTI" ASLEEP IN A HUT.



THE HEARTH.



REMOVING A SICK MAN IN A RED CROSS AMBULANCE.



THE CALL OF THE RED CROSS DOCTOR IN THE MARSHES.



DOCTOR OF THE RED CROSS DISTRIBUTING QUININE.

The Pontine Marshes

perfect drainage of the surface ; it was only later when the level of the coast was lowered that the sea threw up the sandbanks that imprison the waters and form lagoons rich in fish and the producers of mosquitoes. But in the time of the Hellenic immigration the reign of the goddess Malaria had not begun on this shore, which, covered by thickets and fertile fields, sloped up to the Campanian Hills. The lowering of the coast level had begun in the time of Augustus, when part of the Via Appia was already submerged, and the present level was reached in the early Middle Ages. The natural consequence of this fall was the blocking of the outlets of the rivers and the formation of marshes. In spite of the efforts of the emperors and of barbaric kings, the cities fell into decay and were overwhelmed by impenetrable forests, while the fields, once the granaries of Rome, became deadly swamps. The fate of the twenty cities buried in the mire is traceable in that of Ninfa, the "Pompei of the Marshes," the last to succumb.

The Via Appia descends through the olive- and vine-clad slopes from the heights of Velletri to Cisterna. Here the character of the landscape entirely changes ; instead of the tawny colour of the Agro and its constant undulations, we have a plain, flat as a billiard-table, clothed with green. This spacious plain, no longer broken by the rows of poplars that grow even round the desert of Campo Morto, stretches away to the horizon. This is the beginning of the great *Palude*, the marshy region ; not forbidding like the barren Argo, but beautiful, with its emerald carpet, for this fatal region covers its bogs with a luxuriant carpet of vegetation of fascinating loveliness. We are in the kingdom of the goddess Fever, and yet nothing proclaims her presence. The Via Appia runs between two rows of secular elms, mirrored with lovely play of light and shade in the canal beside it,

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whilst all around a soft rich verdure charms the eye ; truly it is the deceitful land of Circe.

In this region there are scarcely any towns or villages—there are perhaps ten hamlets in a hundred and twenty miles square—and yet, unlike the Agro, it is densely populated. The large majority of the population of the Latin Land is to be found in the Pontine Marshes between Cisterna and Terracina.

Cisterna is, above all other places, “the land of the ‘butteri’”; they are more numerous here than in all the rest of Latium put together. It is an ugly village, a strange muddle of old low houses of irregular architecture where traces remain of the destruction wrought by Goths, Saracens, and Normans. Here, though fame knows them not, dwell the boldest riders and the most practised horse-tamers in Europe, if not in the world ; men with aquiline features and bony faces, massive and ruddy, sitting their horses erect as darts. No eye is surer, no wrist is stronger than theirs when they swing their lasso in the air with unerring aim. With his soft felt hat secured by a leather chin-strap, a thick cloak strapped behind his high wooden saddle, and a long pole in his hand, the “buttero” starts at dawn and remains in his saddle till evening.

The gatherings for cattle-marking at Cisterna have a character all their own, for the cattle and buffaloes to be marked are the wildest in Latium, and the cowboys display a courage and dexterity far exceeding that of the famous Spanish toreadors. They face the animals weaponless, and seizing them by the horns throw them to the ground.

On marking-day, oxen and buffaloes are gathered in a meadow surrounded by railed-in enclosures near an oak wood. Around the enclosures stand crowds of “butteri,” cattle-dealers, and other spectators, all in holiday attire, with



AN OX-CART IN THE MARSHES.



A VILLAGE.



AT FORO APPIO.



CROSSING THE RIVER SISTO.

The Pontine Marshes

a carnation behind their ear and silver chains across their waistcoats, observing, discussing, bargaining. There are also women present wearing smart red stays.

Now the first bull is driven into the enclosure; it is muscular and thick-set but very agile, and its coat shines like new bronze. It bounds into the enclosure, and at the sight of the cowboys it stops short, snorting, then raising its tail and lowering its head it waits the attack.

The spectators shout encouragement.

“Come on, boys.”

“Here’s a bad ’un!”

“At him, lads!”

Five cowboys advance; the leader is in his shirt-sleeves, hatless, with a flowing red necktie.

“This one will give some work!”

“Give it him!”

“Seize his horns!”

“Ah-h-h! Son of a dog!”

With treacherous suddenness the bull charges one of its tormentors, but the man leaps nimbly aside and the animal dashes against the fence. It turns furiously and makes for the flaming necktie amidst the increasing excitement of the spectators, who shout directions.

“Help, you there!”

“Get him by the horns!”

“Mama mia!”

With a nimble leap the cowboy avoids the charge and grasps the bull by the horns; it drags him towards the palings, evidently with the intention of crushing him against them; the other cowboys rush forward and throw themselves upon it. The bull foams at the mouth and totters under the weight of its assaulters, but with firmly planted feet and rigid muscles it resists the efforts to throw it. Suddenly a

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dexterous twist destroys its balance, and down it goes with a crash, dragging the men with it. The marker rushes in with his hot iron, and in a twinkling the mark is impressed on its shoulder. Shouts of "Bravo!" arise, and the women and children clap their hands as if it were a theatre.

And so it goes on till all the bullocks, buffaloes, and colts are marked in order of merit by the men of the estate or by a specialist who has come for the purpose and whose fee is a calf.

Wildly excited "butteri" gallop to and fro shouting themselves hoarse. The sun kindles ruddy sparks on their leather leggings and on their buckles and stirrups. It is an orgy of sound and motion, and over the panting mass of men and beasts the dust rises to the sky in a great column like the smoke of a sacrifice in some wild pagan bacchanalia. Tomorrow oxen and buffaloes will graze again in freedom all freshly marked.

The Pontine region is divided into two parts, the "Macchia" and the "Palude." Cisterna is the capital of the former, Terracina of the latter. Between them stands Ninfa, the "Pompei of the Marshes." The Macchia is the higher part, which is covered with woods and where there are many canals but no lagoons. It is an immense wild bush more than sixty miles in circumference, very often so dense that it is impossible to pass except by cutting a way with an axe. The trees are almost exclusively oaks and the undergrowth broom. This district is divided into several woods—the wood of Nettuno, the wood of Cisterna, and so on.

Immediately round Cisterna is the flat, treeless plain of which I have already spoken. As far as Campo Morto the



A PEASANT WOMAN OF THE MARSHES NEAR MONTI LEPINI.



PUNTS ON THE CANALE PIO.



A WILD GOAT.



HUNTERS IN THE MARSHES : A REST.



* NINFA FROM THE NORTH.



HUNTERS IN THE MARSHES : FEEDING THE DOGS.

The Pontine Marshes

ground is covered with a dwarfed and shaggy vegetation, over which the scent of myrtle and rosemary is wafted by the breeze. Beyond this come the woods.

Several water-courses cross the district—the Astura with olive-grown banks, the Mole, the Moscarello shaded by pistachios and lentiscus-trees and the Amasenus.

This region can only be visited on horseback, and it is advisable to wrap oneself in a cloak like that worn by the “*butteri*.”

On our way through the forest we frequently come on places where whole groups of trees have been struck by lightning and where the monarchs of the forest lie rotting in the bog, smothered in ivy, clematis, and clumps of polypody.

The woods are like virgin forests in their luxuriant intricacy, and the gigantic ferns, sometimes as tall as a man, lend them a tropical air. They appear quite unpopulated, yet the greater part of the population of Latium dwells here. The number of shepherds, “*butteri*” and “*guitti*” who live scattered in the huts of the Agro is very restricted, and they occupy a very small portion of the land, but the wooded plain is a busy centre of life. It is a life so primitive and savage as to be hardly conceivable ; it is easier to describe it than to believe that the description is true. The great flood of migratory labour, unseen and unsuspected by the dwellers in the city, rises here to its highest level, and traces of elementary human settlements in all directions speak of this continuous passing to and fro of an unknown people. At certain points of the paths they have built clay ovens where they stop to rest under the vault of heaven. Near Carano, on the edge of the Marshes, some of those ovens are specially noteworthy ; they were built by Menotti Garibaldi for the use of these wanderers. Here and there we come

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across groups of empty dwellings which every evening welcome some passing guests; one of those groups, at Campo Cerreto near Conca, in a low-lying clearing covered with heath, is a queer collection of every possible shape of hut: cone-shaped, rectangular, temporary rounded shelters, and square erections of dry branches.

In the forest a clearing is made for the huts by cutting away the bushes and undergrowth; a hedge surrounds this clearing, which is called a "lestra," a name that is also applied to the huts peculiar to the Macchia, made of the strippings of trees.

What is the life led in this unknown region?

"When from Cisterna we pass into the wide, marshy plain that extends from the Lepini Mountains to the sea," writes one who knows it well, "we find ourselves in the midst of a population whose strange customs and whose poverty are unequalled anywhere, not only in Italy, but in the world. At less than three hours' distance from the capital we find a life which can only be compared to that of the most miserable African tribes."

The Pontine plain is not inhabited by one but by several different populations, whose ways and customs differ considerably. A certain number live in the hamlets scattered at great distances from each other; this class may be considered a privileged one. A much more numerous class consists of the nomad workers, who only remain in one spot from eight to ten days. They are generally enrolled in bands, including both men and women about twenty years of age, and the numbers vary from a few dozen to several hundreds. They camp in the open, under shelters built of Indian corn straw. The greatest licence reigns in these encampments, where men and women herd together without distinction of sex. Their masters do not dream



WESTERN SIDE OF NINFA.



TOWER OF NINFA FROM THE HILLS.



EASTERN SIDE OF NINFA.



MARSH NEAR NINFA.

The Pontine Marshes

of teaching them the most rudimentary notions of hygiene, and by the traces they leave it is easy to recognise long afterwards where one of those human herds has sojourned.

“This year,” says Abbati, “I studied a band of these workers for eight days. They were encamped at Porcareccia, where they were allowed the use of an enclosure which in past years had been used as a place for breeding pigs, hence its name. There more than two hundred men and women slept on straw with no division between the sexes.

“In the villages also the standard of life is very low. The rectangular huts generally house from twenty to a hundred persons. These miserable creatures pass eight months of the year in those windowless hovels, the only openings being a small door at each end. Along the middle of the hut are the hearths, consisting of two stones embedded in a little clay, which support the cauldron in which they cook polenta (flour made from Indian corn), their only food. On either side, platforms three or four yards square, made of boards raised about thirty inches from the ground, serve as bedrooms for whole families, and there, as many as eight persons of both sexes and all ages sleep huddled together on the straw. It is easy to imagine the foulness of the air of these huts, especially when five or six days of rain prevent the inhabitants leaving their den. Dirt and laziness prevail, for the absolute want of light makes any kind of work impossible. I remember having to light a lamp in the middle of the day in order to examine some sick people in one of these hovels.

“Mention has been made of the food on which these people live. I must add that owing to the lack of a proper supply of drinking water they drink the water of the canals, generally that of the Linea Pia. I have seen women clear

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away dead animals and rubbish of every kind before filling their pitchers, and when it rains the water becomes liquid mud.

“ I have calculated that more than five thousand people live in this fashion. These bands are in the hands of individuals called ‘ caporali,’ a true scourge of this land, where they take the place of usurers and slave-drivers, and with whom the landowners in their selfishness are not ashamed to bargain for the quantity of human flesh necessary for the work on the estate.

“ But let us penetrate into the depths of the forest. Under the same conditions, but still more absolutely cut off from all contact with the outside world, in still more squalid hovels, often in caves, we find more than twenty thousand individuals who live like savages.”

Few roads, often none, connect the clearings where these centres of life are built. It requires a great mental effort to realise that we are in the midst of men, of Italians, who are living only a few hours distant from the capital.

Until a few years ago there was no place in this vast region where medical advice could be obtained, not a chemist's shop, not even a medicine chest. The only link between the Pontine Marshes and civilisation was that once a week two priests came down from Sezze ; one celebrated Mass at Foro Appia, the other, first at Tor Tre Ponti and then at Botte ; this done, they went back to their village.

Now the Red Cross has established sanitary stations which minister as far as possible to the wants of a district of ninety miles. Each station is organised as in time of war and is provided with a medical officer, a man-nurse, cart- and saddle-horses, and a pharmaceutical dispensary.

If the Latin Land is ever redeemed it will be largely owing to the marvellous work that the Red Cross is doing,



MEDIEVAL BRIDGE ON THE RIVER NINFA.



G. A. Sartorio.

BUFFALOES IN A MARSH NEAR NINFA.



FROM THE TOWER OF NINFA : BUFFALOES IN A CANAL.



G. A. Sartorio.

THE EVENING HOUR AT NINFA.



G. A. Sartorio.

A PUNT.



THE CANALE PIO.



BRIDGE ON THE AMASENO.



MARSHY LAND.

The Pontine Marshes

both in the Agro and in the Marshes. The municipality of Rome had more than once bethought itself of the welfare of the workers in the country, and they had established sanitary stations, with a room for the treatment of the sick and injured and appliances for their relief. There were two ambulance carts which were supposed to bring in the sufferers, but for lack of horses to draw them they were practically useless. This is not surprising to those who know how difficult it is to find a horse in the Campagna broken for harness. Not even the private initiative of a few of the great landowners, such as Prince Doria, Prince Aldobrandini, General Menotti Garibaldi and others, brought any real improvement in the condition of the sick. Hundreds of disease-stricken people remained without help; every year during the malaria season men dropped dead on the roads leading to the towns; every year the sad sight might be seen of miserable wretches being brought to the hospitals in a dying condition in rough carts quite unsuited to the purpose or on the backs of mules.

Such was the misery which the Red Cross set itself to relieve, and its success is now an acknowledged fact. Fully equipped ambulances go out into the fever districts and remain in those deadly solitudes for months, administering quinine and attending the sick. In 1909, from June to November, 21,892 persons were relieved.

In the Marshes it is absolutely necessary for the doctors and nurses to wear wire masks and gloves to protect themselves from the stings of insects which everywhere infest the air. They start off every morning in a light cart or on horseback, and endeavour to visit every part of their district once in six days. As the districts vary in size, from 180 to 220 square miles, it is no light task. They are fur-

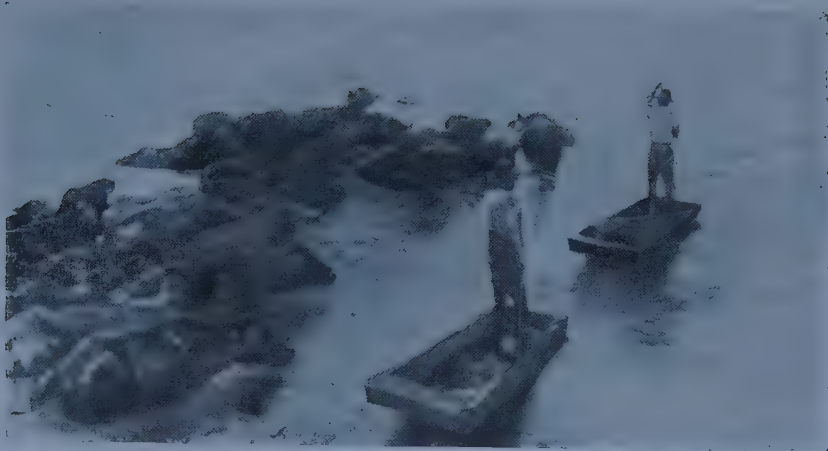
The Roman Campagna

nished with maps, regarding which we read the following significant note in the official report for 1907: "On these maps, drawn on the spot, inhabited localities are marked, and under the heading 'Directions for travellers' the state of the roads and the distances are indicated and other information given which was unknown even to the natives of the places until we appeared on the scene."

When these missionaries of civilisation go into the woods, the assistant blows a sort of hunting-horn, and as the sound echoes through the trees men appear from every side as if they had suddenly sprung out of the ground, emaciated, dull-witted ghosts of men, still somewhat suspicious of the doctor and his remedies.

Such is the work carried on at the cost of much self-sacrifice and devotion under the untiring supervision of Dr. Paul Postemski, who is not only a scientist of world-wide fame, but a noble philanthropist, assisted by Colonel Brezzi and such men as Dr. Bisso, Dr. Oreste Sgambati, and Dr. Massi, pioneers of the best and most humane civilisation.

Until lately the woods of the Pontine Marshes were not only almost impenetrable, they were also dangerous. The men who came down from the mountains were as wild and savage as the cattle they herded. Without education, without affections, the only bond that united them to their fellow-men was that of plunder and smuggling. They lived like their cattle and died like them, without a tear, almost unconscious of being men. If perchance a longing came over them to see again their native village, they appeared there like ghosts with fierce, ashen faces, carrying their axes on their shoulders, but they appeared only to disappear again, returning to the woods where there was no check on their lawless existence.



PUNTERS DRIVING BUFFALOES.



HORSES IN A CANAL.



G. A. Sartorio.

THE CANAL OF VOLTE.



E. Serra.

THE CANAL OF MORTACCINO.

The Pontine Marshes

Now, though these nomads are more numerous, they have become gentler, and are no longer dangerous. From December to July they come down in thousands from the villages in the Abruzzi and the Ciociaria to people the wilds round Cisterna and Terracina. They live in the "lestre," hidden away in mysterious, gloomy nooks, where no one would ever suspect the presence of man. There are in the Macchia about fifty of these groups of huts, in some parts not far apart, in others widely scattered. In the district of Terracina alone there are as many as ten thousand inhabitants, a figure that seems almost incredible as one passes along the solitary paths, where one seldom meets a living being. And yet the charcoal-burners alone constitute a large army, for thousands of tons of charcoal are sent out of the district daily. Next in number are the wood-cutters and those who collect the dry branches and tie them into faggots that are sold wholesale in Naples. Columns of thick smoke, which the sea-breeze twists into fantastic shapes, rise from the fires of the charcoal-burners; long lines of mules bring the sacks of charcoal, and heavy carts drag the logs of wood down to the River Sisto, where they are placed on barges to be taken to the small port of Badino. Another industry is the collecting of the material for brooms; the roots of the broom-plant are pulled up, cut into shape, and sent to Terracina, a work that is partly done by women. Some of the women remain in the huts to prepare the food, which is sadly monotonous—polenta, polenta, always polenta—to which those who can afford it add a seasoning of herbs with a few drops of oil and vinegar. On festive occasions, such as Christmas, New Year's Day, and Easter, they make macaroni. Every other day of the year it is polenta in the morning and polenta again in the evening when the day's work is done.

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The life in these woods is devoid of the very rudiments of civilisation, but it has this advantage, the people live in peace with one another. Amongst these sinister-looking men who continually handle the axe and the knife quarrels are rare, for common misery unites them and makes them fraternise.

From my Note-book :—

“Foro Appia: a hamlet, one of the old post-stations on the ‘regina viarum.’

“To the west of this hamlet the Cisterna forest ends and south of it the forest of Terracina begins. This is the only spot in a radius of twenty miles where there is a shop.

“I started at daybreak from Cisterna on horseback and now from my saddle I look over the vast plain that extends between the two forests; in the clear light of a cold December morning, it seems to stretch away into mysterious distances. This is not the tawny desert of the Agro, with its endless rolling hillocks and its reddish water-courses crossed by wide cart-tracks; this is a green and yellow plain on which a suffocating heat seems to lie, even though its grasses are waving under the gusts of the fierce north wind.

“I am with a ‘buttero’ and some professional sportsmen who have come down for the winter from the Volscian Mountains to hunt boars and wild goats in the Pontine Marshes. We leave the plain and plunge into the woods through oaks and elders which are blazed here and there with a white mark to show the way through the ferns and thorny bushes which are sometimes as tall as a man. There are other signs—little wooden crosses under the trees.

“We pass a lonely hut, built of dry branches and



E. Serra.

THE DEAD CANAL.



THE CANAL OF BOTTE.



THE CANAL OF FOGLIANO.

The Pontine Marshes

surrounded by a strong fence—a necessary precaution in this forest as a protection against wolves and boars. At the doorway an old crone is seated, gnawing a piece of bread made of Indian corn meal. She looks at us sadly and, without any greeting, she mutters some words to the ‘buttero’ which I do not understand.

“ ‘What does she say?’ I ask.

“ ‘That her son is buried near by, and that we are to take care that our horses do not break the cross which marks his grave.’

“Thirty yards farther on, at the mossy roots of an oak, we see a roughly made, small, wooden cross, with a tin tablet already defaced and corroded by the weather. Looking round attentively I see more crosses, sometimes in groups of two and three together at the foot of the trees where the ferns grow more thinly. And still more crosses; every large tree, every dark oak, has its own—poor crosses made of two sticks tied together with grass, small, humble crosses at the feet of the giant trees looking like an apology offered by death for existing near such luxuriant life!

“But the sign of death, however small, cannot be hidden; the crosses continue wherever there is an open space—poor crosses beaten by the wind and rotted by the rain, so humble amidst the massive trunks covered with velvety moss, amidst the plume-like tufts of giant grasses and ferns.

“In vain death tries to hide! This is her kingdom; the forest is the cemetery of thousands who have died like flies, struck down by malaria. They died alone, unknown, on the banks of canals, amidst the thick brushwood, the trees, with their branches twisted and contorted as if in pain, being the sole witnesses of their last moments.

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“The ‘buttero’ seems to have divined my thoughts, for he says—

“‘They have all died of fever! This corner of the forest is a graveyard. Fever seizes them in her icy grasp at sunset and it is necessary to bury them at once, before the boars smell them out and come and devour them!’

“It is frightful! The crosses continue on each side of the narrow path between the mighty trees and tall ferns.

“We come to a river, which we cross; the horses are up to their shoulders in the water. This is the Sisto, the principal river of the district. The men who are guiding us have to keep a sharp look-out for the notches in the trees lest we go astray.

“The Pontine woods are rendered horrible by swarms of large flies that seem to rain from every branch of oak and ilex and to rise from every bush of juniper and bog-myrtle. The soil is carpeted with velvety grass, shaded from the sun by the foliage of the trees. Now and then we come across a green pool glimmering through a thick network of reeds, its waters putrid under the emerald covering of cryptogams, where amid the matted growth of aquatic plants rotten skeletons of trees find a grave. Now and then, in the heart of the wood, stands a solitary hut, looking almost as if it were lurking in ambush.

“We proceed in silence, penetrating ever deeper and deeper into the heart of the forest of Terracina. Suddenly the forest opens out into a glade where a group of six or seven huts are pitched. Just outside the enclosure a number of men are bending over something with their axes and scythes in their hands. On approaching nearer I see that they are busy over the carcass of a horse which is already partly dismembered.



DOCTOR OF THE RED CROSS CROSSING THE CANALE PIO.



MARSH IN WINTER.



CANAL AT TERRACINA.



CANAL AT TERRACINA WITH PUNT.

The Pontine Marshes

“In answer to my look of inquiry the ‘buttero’ says—

“‘They are cutting “coppiette.”’

“‘What are “coppiette”?’ I ask.

“The ‘buttero’ explains briefly : this horse was probably a wild one which met with some accident ; it belonged to nobody, so whoever found it had a right to it, and these windfalls are the only flesh the forest people ever taste. If a rumour reaches them that there is a dead animal they come hurriedly from all round to take possession of it and to cut ‘coppiette,’ even though it should have been buried. With axe, scythe, or knife the carcass is quickly cut to pieces and nothing left but skin and hoofs. On the morrow you will find strips of meat and lumps of fat, green and fetid and covered with flies, hung over the hearth to dry. The bones and intestines are boiling in the cauldron, preparing a pleasant surprise for the workers when they come home to supper. The dried meat is eaten on feast days or when the Indian meal is quite too bitter to be swallowed without some flavouring.

“We linger for a few minutes watching the savage scene. They are all hacking eagerly at the carcass, which is soon reduced to fragments. The workmen are now returning to the huts with their spoil, looking like savages coming home after hunting big game.

“We proceed on our way, but the hunters who had gone on in front send back a boy to ask us to keep still ; they are on the track of a wild boar and two wild goats, so we dismount at a deserted hut.

“The empty hut is cold and melancholy, the fire is extinguished. Yet when a company of weary wanderers take shelter there and rekindle the fire, I can imagine that it will be to them a haven of refuge and repose. And next day they will have found fresh courage to continue

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on the way which the night before had seemed too hard and weary.

"We hear some shots in the distance and then the barking of dogs near at hand. We see indistinctly a dark mass crashing through the brushwood and then there is another shot, followed by a heavy thud. The animal has fallen, and though its small eyes with their reddish lashes are still open it is lifeless. It is a huge beast, weighing at least a hundredweight, with the rough bristles and formidable tusks of the wild boar who does not hesitate to attack man.

"One of the men at once proceeds to cut it open and throw the entrails to the dogs, which eagerly await their share of the prey. The two other hunters, who had gone further afield, now arrive on the scene carrying a fawn-coloured wild goat with half-closed eyes and bleeding throat slung on a pole between them. This is a good bag, and the game is secured on the backs of the horses behind the riders, who start at once for Cisterna to dispose of it. Cisterna is the capital of the Macchia, while Terracina, thirty-five miles distant, is the capital of the whole of the Pontine district."

At the foot of the Volscian Hills lies the Pompei of the Marshes, the town of Ninfa, whose ruins are reflected in the waters of a placid lake.

Ninfa, now overwhelmed by malaria, was an important strategical station on the Via Appia in the eighth century, when it was the guardian of the Roman Maremma. In classic times this delightful spot was as famous as Clitumnus in Umbria, and, like it, had a temple dedicated to the nymphs. The locality was called "Ad Nymphas," and the small clear stream which comes down from the

The Pontine Marshes

mountains and forms the small lake was known as Ninfæum. This stream was held in veneration by the inhabitants of the mountains, who wove round it many fantastic legends, which prove what mystic fascination hovered, and still hovers, over this poetic spot. In the old days, before the depression of the coast had rendered the waters stagnant, legend peopled it with graceful naiads dwelling on enchanted islets which moved to the sound of the lyre. But modern legend tells the gloomy tale of a wicked fairy who lurks near the waters, lying in wait for the passing youths and turning them into aged and infirm men, a parable of the malaria which destroys those who fall into its baleful grasp.

Of the temple of the nymphs nothing remains but the square blocks that served as foundations and to strengthen the bank against the encroachments of the water. This place was Imperial property in the time of the Empire, but the emperors of Byzantium did not value it and in the eighth century Constantine V. gave it to the Church.

The Popes, realising its great strategical importance, built a new wall round it and strengthened the fortifications. During the Middle Ages it changed owners frequently. Its position as the centre of a rich agricultural district made it a coveted prize, and the Counts of Tusculum, who owned a fleet at Terracina, the Frangipani, the Colonna, and the Cætani held it in turn.

But in the end of the fifteenth century it was already abandoned and in ruins, rendered uninhabitable by malaria—*castra diruta Nymphæ*, as it is described in a document of that period. It is absolutely forsaken, dead and buried in its marshy solitude, a solitude that, in spite of its poisonous air, is full of fascination. It is not only for-

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saken, but its history is almost forgotten though it once numbered thirty thousand inhabitants and boasted of nine churches.

To-day moss covers the ruins, broom and thistles and all sorts of luxuriant weeds clothe the streets and squares, while the apses of the churches lie open to the sky. Of its nine churches, eight were inside the walls; the ninth—S. Peter's—was outside, and we pass it as we approach the town. One aisle has fallen, but the two remaining aisles bear traces of frescoes, and the apse with its fine external decoration is well-preserved.

After passing this church we come to the double walls of the town, of which parts are still perfect, showing the gateways with lateral loopholes.

A study of the reddish, irregular masses of ruins enables us to reconstruct the life of the city. The eleven towers still standing and the remains of many others show that it was a fortress; traces of great storehouses recall the fact that it was a first-class emporium, the "granary of Rome," and its wealth is declared by the ruins of fine palaces. One of these palaces with a large tower, close to the town wall, was probably the municipal building.

The river Ninfeum ran through the middle of the town and the strong, well-built arches of the bridges that spanned it are a picturesque feature of the place. Beyond the river the ruins are still more thickly massed amidst the poppies, thyme, and dog's grass. Was this one of the lower quarters of the mediæval town with narrow streets? To the north the apse of a church is still standing; it is decorated with frescoes, but the subjects of the paintings cannot be distinguished, for they have been blackened by smoke from the wood fires lighted by the peasants on wintry days. The city walls are nearly perfect here; ivy covers them and



TERRACINA WOMAN.



TEMPLE OF JUPITER ON THE ACROPOLIS OF TERRACINA.



THE CEMETERY OF PORTO.



THE CEMETERY OF CONCA.

The Pontine Marshes

mantles the gloomy, majestic towers, on whose summits grow clumps of acacia.

The roadways are overgrown with tall grasses and flowers nod from the windows of the empty houses; sometimes it is difficult to trace the line of the streets amidst the intricacies of the shrubs and creepers that wrap them in silent and mysterious beauty.

The baronial castle is a dark and gloomy building with massive walls, still pierced by a few double-arched windows and crowned with Ghibeline battlements. At one side of the courtyard is a tower, whose great height—nearly a hundred feet—shows how important was the jurisdiction exercised by the lords of this town; it is battlemented and provided with loopholes for bowmen.

Ruins and still more ruins; after the palace comes another tower and then a church—that of Sant' Angelo, of which only a part of the right aisle and the apse remain; the dim cloister of prayer now lies open to the glaring sunlight, under which the colours of the frescoes that linger on the vault are fast fading; a wild vine throws its tendrils round the altar, while the Byzantine pavement is replaced by a carpet of clover starred with daisies and violets. A monastery was attached to this church, of which there are considerable remains.

Ninfa was a centre of monastic life; most of the Orders had large houses here, and the influence of Byzantium was strong. In consequence of the fact that the city was the possession of the emperors, it had its "Palatine" church, recognisable in Santa Maria Maggiore, the original name of which was perhaps San Cesario, after the protector of the Cæsars. A painting of this saint is traceable in the apse, his identity being established by a fragmentary inscription as well as by the fact that he holds on his knees the

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“codicil” and is flanked by portraits of two “Augusti.” An oratory was dedicated to San Cesario on the Palatine where Greek rites were celebrated and where the urban prefects of Rome exhibited the portrait of the Emperor when the news of his election came from Constantinople. The fresco at Ninfa, which will soon vanish under the influence of rain and sunshine, is an important memento of imperial sway.

The third-century campanile of the church still stands as well as large fragments of the walls of the cloisters, where the kite perches at noon and which at night are haunted by owls and bats. We can trace the outlines of the refectory and corridors and of the cells where the monks passed their silent lives in prayer and study. This place, which was the refuge for weary men, where those who realised the vanity of earthly dreams had sought refuge in Christ, and in the solitude and peace of the cloister had found time to live the life of the soul and to raise their eyes to heaven, is now a confusion of crumbling ruins open to the vulgar gaze and over-run by Nature that mocks at man's work.

The arches of this church of Santa Maria Maggiore, where lizards play and spiders weave giant webs, rang with the music of Gregorian chanting one night in the twelfth century when a cardinal who had fled from Rome was consecrated Pope. This was Alexander III., the founder of the Lombard League, enemy and vanquisher of Frederick Barbarossa.

Through which streets did the papal procession wend its way? The Strada Sabalsana, the Serragonia, or the De Plagano? Did it pass the Turris de Inserra, crowded by rejoicing people, and skirt the Fontana de Calcarella and through the Pernazonis quarter, issuing from the Porta Santa Maria and returning by that of S. Blasio? And did



THE CEMETERY OF GALERIA.



CHAPEL ON THE VIA ARDEATINA.



THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF SAN MARIO AT BOCCIA.



G. A. Sartorio.

THE CEMETERY OF OSTIA.

The Pontine Marshes

the new Pope in passing make the sign of excommunication towards the "ara major," the surviving emblem of a pagan worship destroyed by triumphant Christianity?

A poetic sadness hovers over the city, and at sunset, when the flocks and herds go down to drink at the pool of the nymphs, the shepherd, dressed in goatskins, echoes the voices of the past in the wailing notes of his bagpipes. The fading glow of daylight lies like a soft caress on the still waters, on the ruins, on the woods; the great golden disk sinks into the violet sea and the sweet, weird music pours its incantation over the darkening land.

It is the hour in which the "Fata" of Ninfa, wondrous and fatal, sister to the sirens of Circeo, rises stealthily into the air.

As I have already said, the Pontine Marshes were formed by the gradual depression of the coast, a lowering which had already begun in the time of Augustus and which continued during the Middle Ages, turning this territory, once the granary of Rome, into a miasmatic swamp.

During the Empire canals were cut across it, amongst them the "Decennovium," by which Horace sailed when he went to Brindisi. Trajan and Theodoric both tried to drain the district, 180 miles in circumference, but their efforts were vain.

The Popes also gave their attention to the problem of the Pontine swamps. Boniface VIII., Sixtus V., and Leo X. all tried to drain them, but the most effective measure was that begun by Pius VI. in the eighteenth century. This was the cutting of a large canal called the Linea Pia to collect the waters of the various streams that formed the swamps. The line selected alongside the Via Appia was the right one, but many miscalculations had been made,

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much money was wasted, and finally three supplementary channels had to be cut. One of these channels collects the waters of the lower streams, the Cavatella and the Portatone, and runs into the Linea Pia at Foro Appia. The waters of the higher streams, such as the Linfa, the Teppia, the Fossa di Cisterna, the Rio del Maschero and other smaller ones were diverted from the plain by leading them directly into the river Sisto. The Ufente, the Rio Brivolco, and the Amaseno, which flooded the southern part of the Pontine territory, were carried into the Pantano dell' Inferno, where it was expected that the mud they deposited would gradually fill the hollow, and thence to the Linea Pia at Ponte Maggiore. The rivers thus provided for, it only remained to drain off the rain-water, and for this two canals were made—those of Schiazza and Botte.

Such was the system of drainage initiated by Pius VI. Unfortunately, the Pope with prodigal generosity distributed the lands amongst a few rich proprietors and handed over the completion of the work to them. There is now a Pontine Association, but the work has been neglected; great parts have never been touched, and what has been done is badly done. Only 7,000 acres out of 30,740 are completely drained. Of the remainder, a part dries up in the summer, but it breeds fever in its ditches, so that, although Indian corn yields large returns when sown, there is little cultivation.

The network of canals is navigated by flat, rectangular boats, very like English punts, called "sandaloni." Boating is rendered difficult by the aquatic plants that grow thickly in the canal beds; these weeds are frequently cleared away by herds of buffaloes which are driven by the cowboys along the waterways, tearing and trampling the plants as they pass. The strong animals force their way through the



THE OLD CEMETERY OF ARDEA.



THE PRIEST CELEBRATES MASS UNDER A CANOPY IN THE WIDE PLAIN.



"WHERE THE CURRENT RUNS SLOW."



A SCAVENGER OF THE CANALS.

The Pontine Marshes

tangle with difficulty, snorting loudly, their shining muzzles just above the miry waters and long trails of green hanging from their horns.

The use of "sandali" dates from very early times, and they are to be found in all the ponds and canals. The ancient Romans used them to go from Foro Appia to Decennovio; in the Middle Ages they were still in use, for in 1200 the Abbey of Grottaferrata was granted the privilege of *duos sandalos ad piscandum in lace Folianensi*.

Punting in the Marshes, whether on the canals connecting the lakes near the coast or on the sunnier but not less desolate ones between the Via Appia and the mountains, is fraught with a strange, unforgettable melancholy.

Signor Abbati thus describes a journey in a "sandalo": "Although it is early morning and the sky is splendidly blue, no song rises to our lips. The wearisome croaking of frogs is more in keeping with these dead waters than the songs that usually cheer the boatman's life. You may as well lie down in the bottom of the punt; not a word, not a song will escape your boatman's lips; not a word, not a song from the lips of the boatmen of the punts you meet. The air is heavy and oppressive; the stinging of the insects, the loneliness that surrounds you, the lead-coloured strip of canal stretching straight and monotonous before you, the sickening smell of water-weeds rotting in the sun, the mist rising from the water as if to insult the brilliant sunshine, the thought of the many unknown victims of this sad region, all induce a sense of painful depression.

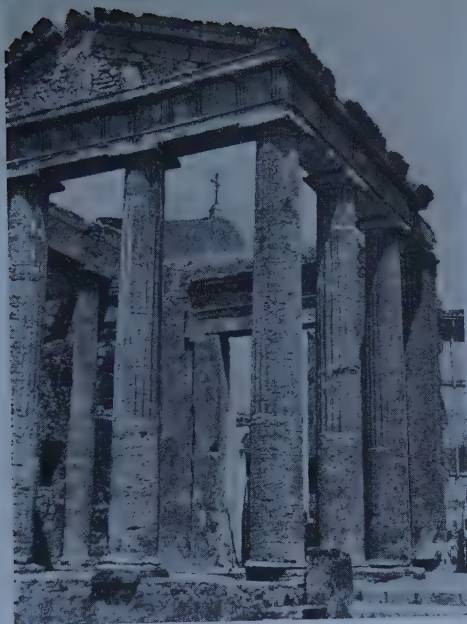
"If you listen attentively, if you look closely at the banks, you will hear and see a confused swarm of shapeless things moving amongst the luxuriant green and suddenly plunging into the water to hide in its depths; if you let your hand slip into the water you shudder at its

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slimy touch, and rotting water-weeds will pass between your fingers like the hair of corpses which lie putrid in the bottom. And the punt glides on silently, passing under trees so bent by the wind that they almost kiss the surface of the water.

“Suddenly we emerge from the canal into a small lake covered here and there with water-lily leaves stained with a rusty brown. The sultry atmosphere is full of buzzing insects; queer, long-legged creatures run on the surface of the waters. Every stroke of the pole sends up bubbles of putrid, sulphureous gas. Upon every water-lily leaf a snake is coiled, shining water-snakes with emerald backs, which lie there in the sun, slowly raising their sly heads and protruding their forked tongues. But at a splash all these green bracelets uncoil and dive under the leaves. The water gurgles, the sulphureous smell is mixed with the strong scent of musk which the snakes have left behind them.

“We proceed. The boat enters another canal. The water is deeper and darker. We are nearly back to the Lake of Fogliano, which we left half an hour ago. What dreariness! We move as in an endless, horrible dream, a nightmare of dead things, and we feel as though we also were beginning to die. The silence is appalling. Not a sound is heard; the pole dips noiselessly into the water and the punt glides on through the reeds. Everything seems unreal; we lose touch with life in any form, ideas waver off in a torpor in which thought dissolves like the grasses rotting under the still waters. Our brain becomes as stagnant as the air, the water, the sunshine, things which in other places are full of life. Slowly we go on amidst the motionless canes on the murky waters. The pole now and then makes a sucking sound like a sob heard from afar, a



TEMPLE OF HERCULES AT CORI.



EVERY SHRINE IN THE CAMPAGNA IS DECORATED WITH
ROSES.



PRIEST CELEBRATING MASS AT AN ALTAR ON A CART.

The Pontine Marshes

reverberation of the life we have forsaken and are beginning to forget."

If night falls while we are still punting, we notice that every stroke of the pole wakens phosphorescent sparks that play on the surface of the water and along the pole.

The waterways of the Pontine region are innumerable, and each one has its special note in the melancholy and fantastic symphony of the Marshes. Thus while the Canale Grosso, or Portatore, which runs into the sea at Terracina and is the principal outlet of the district, is sunny and open, the canal called "delle Volte," because of its tortuous course, winds its picturesque but gloomy way through a virgin forest which covers its opaque, slimy waters with a thick roof of branches. The Mortaccino Canal runs long and straight, bordered with reeds and water-grasses, and the Fiume Morto is encumbered by a tangle of vegetation; it is the grave of a whole vegetable world that lies rotting in its waters. Generation after generation of plants has risen and died and has formed floating masses of peat and rubbish. And those of the Lakes of Fogliano and Monici are the gloomiest of all, closed in on every side by thick jungle, and their slimy, dark waters have a sinister aspect.

All the waterways meet at Ponte Maggiore on the Via Appia, nine miles from Terracina, and thence they are carried to the sea by the broad canal called the Portatore of Badino, whilst another branch connects the Linea Pia with the harbour of Terracina, which is two miles from the mouth of the Portatore.

Terracina is the capital of the Marshes, and is the headquarters of all the navigation on the canals; here we see punts of all kinds; light ones for passengers, often full of peasants; heavier ones for cargo, laden with charcoal and faggots; sometimes one comes in laden with big game,

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wild goats, a boar, or it may be a wolf, for which the authorities offer a reward.

The life of the Pontine Marshes centres in this little city, a life of toil and privation led by men whose very existence is ignored by their fatherland.

But Terracina is not only the city of the Marshes. She looks towards the sea and is cheered by exhilarating breezes. For here an offshoot of the fertile shore of Cumia invades the south of the Latin Land, and wild flowers bloom and the air is full of light and life. The town is surrounded by gardens and by wide fields of Indian corn, where women, in their picturesque costumes, gather the cobs and carry them home in heaped-up baskets.

Trajan built a harbour here, and on the hill which dominates the plain there was a temple dedicated to the infant Jupiter. It stood on a high platform, lately brought to light, facing the east. A broad stairway, still existing, led to the "pronaos," which was decorated with Corinthian columns; other very beautiful columns of precious marbles ornamented the "cella," where stood the statue of the god, while the pavement was of mosaic.

This temple was built towards the end of the Republican era; during the Empire it was burnt down and rebuilt and embellished. Later, when Christianity triumphed over paganism, the temple of Jupiter Anxur, like so many others, was despoiled of its treasures for the adornment of the churches of the new religion. Gradually time completed the destruction of its beauty; the remaining pillars fell and rolled down into the valley amongst the thickets. The walls crumbled into heaps on which wild plants grew and flowered spring after spring and birds nested undisturbed among them.

Not very long ago a number of votive offerings, almost



E. Serra.

CANAL OF FOGLIANO.



The Pontine Marshes

all made of lead, were found under layers of ashes in the ruins of the temple. These are interesting as they are miniature models of articles used in a house, such as table and kitchen utensils, brackets, vases, stools, candelabra, small cupboards, and the figure of a "puer dopiser," the boy who carried the dishes. There were models also of the special sandals which guests wore at Roman banquets while seated at table.

The view from the height looking through the arches of the splendid building is most beautiful. We look over the great Pontine plain, veiled by light mists through which glimmer pools and canals amid forests and fields, to the mountains that lie rosy on the horizon. Terracina climbs the hill gay with flowers; carnations peep from the window-ledge and vines wreath the balconies with garlands of green, while groves of orange and oleander perfume the air.

The plan of this Volscian city, called variously Anxur and Trachinia, recalls the Hellenes, who founded it. The Acropolis and the temple to the god were on the height and at its foot was the agricultural city.

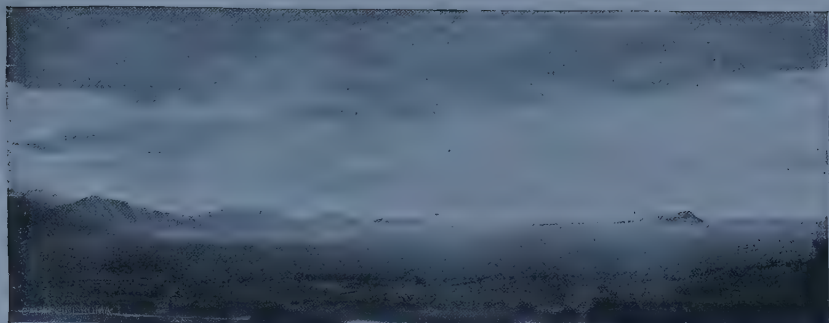
CHAPTER XII

THE CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

AT the foot of the Acropolis was the necropolis. It was the traditional custom of the Latins to bury their dead in the valley below the Acropolis; at Tusculum, at Castel Gandolfo (acropolis of Alba), at Anzio, the necropolis is at the foot of the hill on which the fort stood, and so also in early days the Roman Forum was the cemetery of the city on the Palatine.

The Etruscans and the Latins sometimes buried their dead and sometimes cremated them. Unfortunately, when Etruscan cemeteries are discovered on the Campagna, they are generally despoiled of the few articles left by preceding plunderers and turned into pigstyes, as, for instance, those at Tragliatella, at Bomarzo, and at Cerveteri.

The Latin Land is one of the greatest cemeteries in the world and the tombs are of all epochs. Some belong to the age when man's dwellings were raised on piles in the marshes, and those contain urns shaped like the trunks of trees; many can be dated by their shape; the well-shaped ones are very old; rectangular ones are of the days of the Kings; and the chamber tombs at Cere, Vejo, and Tarquinia belong to the first Republican era. The later Republic and the Empire built magnificent mausoleums along the Consular roads by which the victorious armies



MONTI LEPINI.



MONTE GENNARO.



O. Carlandi.

THE SABINE HILLS.



THE PEAK OF ETA IN THE MONTI TIBURTINI.

The Churches and Cemeteries

passed, to the glory of the dead and for the admonition of the living.

Then, as the Empire decayed, the construction of those subterranean cemeteries which are such a unique feature of the Roman Campagna, the wonderful network of the Catacombs was begun.

For three hundred years this subterranean world grew and spread, till the land was honeycombed in every direction with hundreds of miles of narrow passages and these Christian and Jewish catacombs formed a veritable city of the dead, visited by the living for the purpose of honouring their brothers in the faith.

The name of catacomb was first given to one alone of these cemeteries, that close to the suburban church of S. Sebastiano, but it was afterwards applied to all. There are more than thirty of them, and they are to be found in every part of the Campagna, the most important being those of S. Callixtus on the Via Appia, the Ciriaco on the Via Ostiense, Santa Domatilla on the Via Ardeatina, Calepodias on the Via Aurelia, Pontianus on the Via Portuense, Thraso on the Via Salaria, and Sant' Ippolito on the Via Tiburtina.

When Christianity triumphed the sepulchres of the saints became famous; not that they were ever really concealed, for the Christians were enrolled as one of the burial clubs, protected by law, and could therefore bury their dead openly. It was not because of the celebration of their special rites that they were persecuted, but because they refused to join in sacrificing to the emperor. The erection of the first suburban chapels, which later became the first churches of the Campagna, was permitted by law.

Porto and Ostia were the first places where these small rural chapels, consecrated for funeral rites, were erected; later, little cemeteries sprang up round the abodes of the

The Roman Campagna

first hermits, such as that of Sant' Andrea in Flumine, that of Subiaco in the Anio Valley, that of Trisulti and that of Fossanuova. The last-named is a dark, lonely cemetery at the foot of Monti Lepini, on the threshold of the Pontine Marshes, situated in a little amphitheatre of the olive-clad hills and shaded by a belt of stone pines.

In these quiet cemeteries the dead sleep peacefully round the little chapels, which in the Middle Ages were the mystic centre of rural life.

When the barbaric invasions had laid waste the churches and the graves of venerated martyrs, those cemeteries became what they are now, forlorn islands in the desolate country.

Little cemeteries of the Campagna surrounded by a wall to prevent the wolves and wild boars profaning the poor tombs; little cemeteries where the solemn cypresses, rising above the sunburnt plain, are like the pinnacles of invisible cathedrals!

They are small, these cemeteries, and yet they are large compared to the number of the inhabitants; but not too large for the victims that were claimed by the goddess Fever during the years that she held undisputed sway.

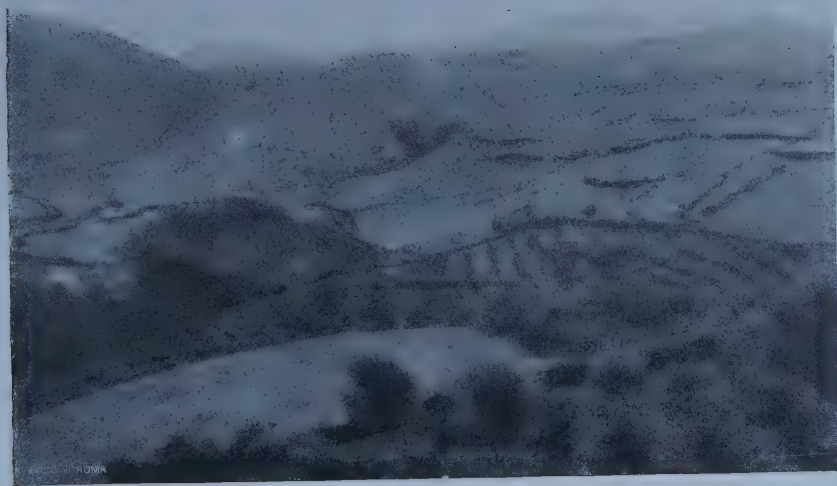
Sometimes an olive or an oak, as at Ostia and at Porto, watches over the graves from outside the wall; sometimes, as at Galeria, a little grove of cypresses rises inside the square enclosure; sometimes, as at Sermoneta and Conca, two cypresses stand solitary on either side of the rusty gate and shimmer in the sun like sacred torches lighted in front of the tombs.

At Sermoneta the cemetery at the foot of the olive-clad hill on which the village stands (acropolis, necropolis), is surrounded by a portico with a chapel opening off it.

In the cemetery at Conca, standing high above the road,



ON THE ERNICI.



THE CHAIN OF THE TIBURTINI.



CAVE MADE INTO A HOUSE.



A MEADOW IN THE MONTI TIBURTINI.

The Churches and Cemeteries

from which it is reached by a narrow stair, the humble crosses marking the graves of the poor victims of malaria had, the last time I saw it, vanished beneath the lusty growth of wild fennel and dog's grass.

Winter is the time that it pleases me best to visit these humble cemeteries, when the weeds have withered and only the tufts of asphodels, with their sharp, lance-like leaves, remain, the asphodels, pale flowers of Persephone. I have a remembrance of their elysian grace and dignity as seen in the mournful light of a grey winter evening in the old cemetery of Ardea.

A few humble chapels, whose only adornment is the bunches of wild flowers laid before the shrine, are scattered here and there, oases for prayer in the wilderness, as the "domus cultæ" are oases for life. And some poor shepherd or a passing tramp comes and kneels down at their closed grating, leaning his forehead against the bars. Some of these humble churches have claims to fame; that of Boccea, for instance, on the Via Aurelia, "*ad nymphas Catabassi*," that is, "the church of the waters of the low hill," was for many centuries the resting-place of the holy martyrs who suffered under Claudius the Goth. . . .

It would be difficult to find any other rite as curious and interesting as that of the celebration of mass in the Campagna, when the priest officiates from the altar-cart before the reapers gathered in the threshing-floor or under a canopy in the open plain, before a congregation which has followed the sacred insignia across the wind-swept stretches of the wide Campagna.

"Religious traditions in the Campagna," writes Tomasetti, "have not been affected by the incredulity of the cities, for the country people have little intercourse with the dwellers in towns beyond momentary meetings for business.

The Roman Campagna

“There is a humble church, dedicated to the Madonna of the Annunciation, on the Via Laurentina; it dates from very early times, and was held in such *estime* that it was one of the nine churches—a number afterwards reduced to seven—at which indulgences were granted to those who made pilgrimages to them; the road which led to it was called ‘Via Oratoria,’ because the pilgrims chanted prayers and psalms as they journeyed along it.

“But now this road has become the scene of a pilgrimage of merry-makers who come to celebrate Spring on the first Sunday of May. Those who take part in this festival wear a garland of roses, reminding us of the feast of roses (*Rosationes*), which on this same road was celebrated in spring-time by the Roman country people in the days of old. Roses have always been held in special favour in the Campagna; the peasant women wear pins in their hair decorated with silver roses; the wine-carrier paints his cart with wreaths of roses; the shrine of every Madonna is decorated with roses. The festival of the ‘Divine Love’ (which is held in honour of a Madonna who is said to protect passers-by from the attack of the fierce Campagna dogs), may be said to be a festival of roses. Two things are noticeable at this festival. The first is the enthusiastic devotion of the peasants from the neighbouring villages; they are moved to tears as they pray and sing in the church, and they bring their friends, who are afflicted by diseases, in the fervent hope of a cure. The other is the coarse merriment of revellers from Rome who feast in the meadows and get drunk in the taverns. Here we see the enduring contrast between the devout countryman and the brutal, arrogant prize-fighter of the Suburra.”

The peasants of the “*domus cultæ*” and the shepherds hold the saints in the greatest reverence. But the ancient



SHEPHERDS AT A MOUNTAIN WELL.



VESPERS: RETURN OF THE FLOCK TO THE FOLD.



A SHEPHERD.



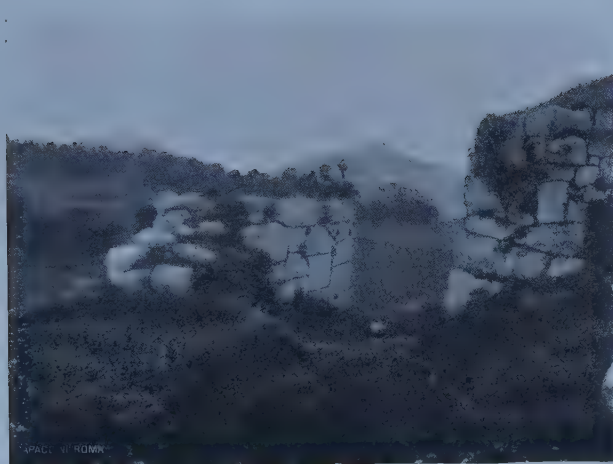
THE VOLSCIAN HILLS.



CORI.



CYCLOPIC WALLS AT CORI.



CYCLOPIC WALLS AT NORMA.



ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE AT SUTRI IN THE MONTI CIMINI.



THE AUSONIAN HILLS.

The Churches and Cemeteries

divinities, feared and adored, have only changed their names; the Madonna is venerated in the ancient shrines of Mercury and the sylvan deities; San Silvestro has the same attributes as Sylvanus, god of the snowy summits; the Rogation procession, for the benediction of the fields, is the same ceremony as that of the Arvali Brothers; Sant' Ippolito exercises the functions of the Castori, tamers of horses; and San Cesario is a substitute for the Cæsars, to whom sacrifices were offered. The religion of the Campagna peasant is the old religion under a new name; it is the worship of the mysterious, eternal forces of nature which must be appeased at any cost, because their dominion lies heavy on the land, which they have made desolate to the limits of its distant horizon.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MOUNTAINS OF LATIUM

SEEN on the map, the mountains that bound the Campagna on three sides have almost the appearance of a scythe, with the point to the north and the handle to the south.

Every here and there their summits are hollowed out into wide craters whose covering of vegetation does not hide the lines which give them the appearance of motionless whirlpools. For nearly all these mountains are of volcanic origin. It was in an amphitheatre of lava, smoke, and flame that at the end of the fluvial period, when the Tiber ran in a bed more than a mile wide, the region round Rome was moulded into its present form.

At the extreme north of this region, the Volsiniensian range owes its existence to the same volcanic outbreak that led to the upheaval of the Ciminian group, to the south of which are the Sabitini, where the lakes of Bracciano, Martignano, and Stracciapappe lie in the old craters.

Monte Soracte, to the north-west, is completely isolated, geologically speaking.

To the east run the outlying spurs of the Apennines, the Cornicolani, the Sabines with Monte Gennaro, the Simbruin chain with Monte Autore; and southwards, the heights of the Ernici, the Prenestrini ranges with Monte Guadagnolo, and the Tiburtini.



A WOMAN OF NORMA.



ON THE BORDERS OF THE ABRUZZI.



PEASANT WOMAN OF THE SABINE HILLS.



PEASANT WOMAN OF THE ALBAN HILLS.



"CIOCIARA" OF THE VOLSCIAN HILLS.

The Mountains of Latium

Along the Pontine Marshes run the Lepini Mountains with the chains of the Arunci and Ausoni; to this group belong Monte Calvillo and Monte Circeo, the mystic hills, which curve round to the sea and bound the plain to the south.

Almost in the centre of the plain lies the volcanic group of the Alban Hills, where Monte Cavo rises on the edge of the central crater, which is now an ample flat meadow, called the Camp of Hannibal. The lakes of Albano and Nemi, of Turnus, Colonna, and Pantanoscuero, and the Castiglione and Ariccia valleys are all in extinct craters.

The banks of these motionless whirlpools are clothed with luxuriant vegetation, the grey of the olives and the dark green of the laurel blending with the rusty and ashen tints of the ground. Over all the landscape there breathes the spirit of that elegiac poetry which draws its inspiration from Nature and fills the heart with gentle melancholy.

Everywhere in these mountains, the principal peaks, Monte Gennaro in the north, Monte Circeo in the south, and Monte Cavo in the centre, were the spots chosen for the celebration of the rites of the primordial Italic religions.

Monte Gennaro is the highest point of the spur which the ancients called Lucretile and which some geographers include in the Cerauni range.

Lonely and pleasant are the heights of this imposing mountain, everywhere clothed with century-old trees except on the wide tableland called the Pratone. And on the summit there is a notable object of interest, a large cumulus of rough stones, which recalls the stone heaps dedicated to Mercury, of which ancient authors speak.

The Roman Campagna

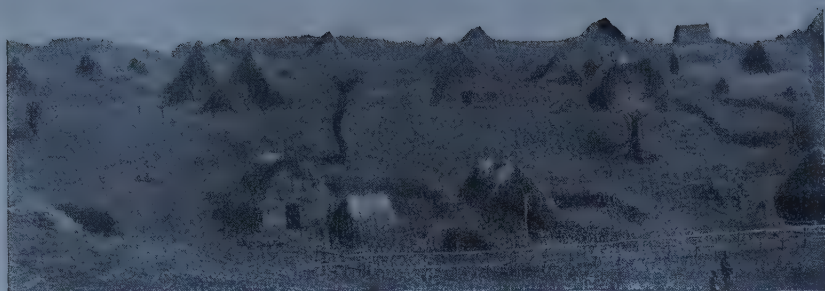
The view from this mountain is glorious; we seem to be in the centre of an immense theatre where the Etruscan, Sabine, and Latin mountains are the seats, and the stage is outlined by the silvery gleam of the Tyrrhenean Sea; to this stage the actors descended from the surrounding heights, and on this plain we become aware for the first time of the various tribes which formed the Roman people—the Luceres (Etruscans), Titienses (Sabines), and Ramnenses (Latins), the tribes led respectively by Lucumon, Tatius, and Romulus.

Looking in the other direction the eye falls on the gloomy forests that clothe the Sabines and on the sheer precipices that fall away to the Monti Cornicolani, which, from this altitude, appear mere undulations.

But it was not Monte Gennaro but Monte Cavo, the old Mons Albanus, that became the religious centre of Latium.

That Monte Cavo was thrown up from the depths of the Alban Hills during the second Latial eruption, of which the crater called Hannibal's Camp was the centre, is proved by the nature of the strata, and there can be no doubt that at the time of this eruption the environs of the crater were inhabited. The rough stone arms, the plants and bones of animals found in the lava bear clear witness on this point and prove that this life belonged to the archeolithic and neolithic eras—that is to say, to the rough stone and polished stone ages.

Monte Cavo became the most prominent peak overlooking the Latin plain, and the memories of its fiery origin, together with the gloomy forests that clothed it, led succeeding generations to regard it as the dwelling-place of supernatural beings, and they therefore consecrated it to their chief god, Jupiter. It became the



A VILLAGE OF HUTS.



AN OLD FARMHOUSE.



THE ROMAN FORUM.



THE SUNNY WIDTH OF THE TIBER.

The Mountains of Latium

centre of the Latin Confederation and was looked on as their Pole star. When the people gathered for business at the great fair held in the grove of Ferentina lower down the slopes, they at the same time ascended the mountain to the first sanctuary of the race, the common property of the League of the Ernician, Volscian, and Latin tribes. The time of the erection of the temple is uncertain, but it undoubtedly dates from very early ages.

Every year, generally in autumn, solemn festivals were held, called the Latin *Feriæ*, in which forty-seven cities participated. The Consuls representing the confederate cities assembled at Alba Longa and went in solemn procession to the sanctuary, where a heifer was sacrificed and the flesh distributed amongst them. After the ceremony the delegates gathered at a federal banquet, and the people also feasted joyously.

Festivals were also held before the beginning of a war. Hence, when Rome had made herself head of the Latin Confederation, those generals whose victories were not considered important enough to entitle them to the supreme honour of leading a triumph to the Capitol, came here to be crowned with laurel.

The architecture and the rites of the temple were Pelasgic and Italic. It was a roofless enclosure, and in the centre was a shrine, facing the east; on the sides of this shrine, many fragments of which have been found, the ceremonial of the festival was inscribed.

But the ancient divinities grew old and new ones arose, temples were replaced by churches — *Christus imperat!* And to-day nothing remains of this temple but a few blocks of stone built into the wall of the garden of the monastery.

The first record of a church, however, is not a very

The Roman Campagna

early one; it is not till 1500 that we hear of a small chapel being dedicated here to S. Peter, though the name Monte Cavo seems to have replaced the old one of Mons Albanus about 1200.

Thus the blue heights that encircle the Campagna are doubly linked with sacred memories, sanctuaries built by Nature and adopted by man for worship.

The mountain-tops were probably the first seats of human life in the district, and in the alluvial period, when the plain was the scene of a conflict between fire and water, our ancestors looked down on the struggle from the safety of the hills. With the extinction of the volcanoes at the end of the Quaternary Age, the war between fire and water subsided; the rivers, such as the Tiber and its affluents, reduced to their present size, carved out channels for themselves in the midst of their ancient beds, and the Roman Campagna assumed the geological aspect it wears to-day. Primitive man moved farther down the slopes, as the utensils of remote antiquity found buried in the volcanic cinders near Marino testify. Then he cautiously advanced into the plain, lured by the fertility of the soil, but he still looked up with gratitude to the heights which had been his refuge, and on their summits he raised altars for sacrifice and prayer to the mysterious powers to whose beneficent guardianship he ascribed his safety.

The origin of a procession that survived in Rome for many centuries is due to this association with the mountain, that of the "Lapis Manualis" or "Aquælicium," whose object was to invoke rain. In it the priests carried a sacred stone; they started from the temple of Mars outside Porta Capena and, followed by barefooted matrons and magistrates without their insignia of office, they marched to the centre of the city. The stone typified the mountain, associated with



E. Coleman.

ON THE ALBAN HILLS IN THE OLDEN DAYS.



A. S. S. S. S.

The Mountains of Latium

the clouds, for does not Atlas support the heavens? Therefore their prayers for water were addressed to it, as to the rock whence gushes the spring and around which gather the clouds that dissolve in rain. This ceremony continued to be observed till the time of Augustus.

In remote ages the soul of man, living amidst these rocky fastnesses, inevitably became closely allied with the great soul of the mountain. It supplied him with the stone for his rough weapons; in its caves were his hearths where he rested; here he laid his dead; from it he made his amulets; amidst its crags he was born, loved, suffered, and died.

“What a widespread conflict the mountain must have witnessed,” exclaims a student of ancient civilisations, “when the migratory tribes of the Iron Age met and drove before them the poor people of the Stone Age.”

On these mountains the men who knew the use of bronze—Pelagians, Sicanians, Cyclops, and Phrygians—met the Aborigines, who only knew the use of stone.

The progress of civilisation amongst this eminently pastoral people had been peaceful and slow and their arms had remained primitive. At the approach of danger they retreated with their herds and flocks to the enclosures on the heights.

The invaders, with their more advanced methods of offence and defence, conquered easily; they drove the mountaineers out of their fastnesses and seized their cattle. To the confused minds of these poor conquered shepherds the newcomers must have seemed mysterious beings gifted with supernatural powers.

The earliest traces of human life are to be found on the summits of mountains and in caverns, and even to this day some of these caverns are still inhabited. If one could cut

The Roman Campagna

a vertical section down through history, it would be seen that life began on the mountains and constantly tended to descend to sea-level. Our present civilisation is essentially a thing of the plains and valleys and the reason is obvious: it is a commercial and industrial civilisation which has two great aims—to produce, and to find a market for its produce.

In the ancient agricultural and military civilisation the plain of Lombardy played a subordinate part; the heights were its seats. Every Etruscan city, with the exception of Pisa, was situated on a hill from whence it ruled over the neighbouring valleys and plain, for the military position must necessarily have had land for the development of agriculture.

Rome also was a hill city, and perhaps the fact that it began by being a group of fortified heights was one of the first causes of its greatness. When the rude shepherds in the course of their migration arrived at the Tiber, they did not build their dwellings in the valley, but on the crests of the hills; and on the Palatine, which took its name from Pales, goddess of the fields, they built the enclosure which afterwards became the fortified city. *Rumon*, the river city, slowly developed into Rome.

In the Middle Ages also civilisation may be said to have had its seat in the heights, for was it not a civilisation of castles? It is true a new element comes in which did not exist in the purely military and agricultural organisations of early times, that is, the monastery; but the moving forces of history are not to be sought for in the silence of the cloister, but in the life and energy of the castle.

So it comes that we find two classes of dwellings on the mountains of Latium, those of early days and those of the Middle Ages. To the first class belong Vallerone, Sutri, and Vetralla in the Monte Cimini; Montefiascone and

The Mountains of Latium

Acquependente in the Volsiniensi; Palestrina, Olevano, Alatri, Veroli, Cori, Norma, Sezze, and Norba. In all those towns ruins and fragments of walls show that they are amongst the earliest inhabited places of the earth.

Nibby gives the following account of Cori :—

“The town clings to one of the spurs of the Lepini Mountains. It faces south-west and is shaped like a pyramid, of which the temple of Hercules is the apex. Two streams flank it in deep wooded ravines, and the situation must have been a very strong one in ancient times. When these two streams meet they form the Fosso dei Picchioni which flows into the Teppia, the most unruly of all the torrents that rush down from the hills to the Pontine Plain. The city is divided into two parts, and between the upper and the lower is an olive grove which, given the nature of the ground, must always have existed; the upper part, which was the citadel, is now called ‘Cori à Monte,’ and the lower, which was the city itself, is called ‘Cori à Valle.’

“The remains of the ancient buildings date from four different epochs: the earliest are constructed of enormous blocks of limestone left untrimmed just as they were hewn out of the mountain; the interstices between the blocks are filled in with small stones from the river-bed. This construction is similar to that of the Cyclopic walls of Tyrintum and Mycenæ. In the second epoch, irregular polygon blocks are used, left rough on the face but carefully cut on the sides next the other blocks so that they fit closely. In the third epoch the stones are smoothed on every side, and in the fourth the blocks are small and often round; this last style is always found superimposed on the others, so it is evidently the most recent.

“The acropolis of Cori was, after the Roman occupation,

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divided into two parts—the Arx, properly so called, on the west, and the Capitol on the east, for the Roman colonies all had their Capitol in imitation of the metropolis. I have found no remains worthy of note in the Arx except the enclosing wall, but in the Capitol the area of the temples can still be traced, and the portico of that of Hercules is still standing.”

Not far from Cori, on the same spur, stands Norba, which is so old that its origin is legendary. The prehistoric city was large and covered the entire tableland on the top of the rocky hill; all that remains of it are the Cyclopic walls, which show that it was an irregular octagon in shape with rounded corners. The circuit of the walls is about a mile; the stones are carefully cut except in places where they were concealed by the cliffs, in which case they were left rough.

There is no sign of any roof, nor is there any trace of supports for gates in the edges of the gateways. The mode of building the corners of those entrances is noteworthy; in order to offer more resistance to the impact of carts or war-engines the blocks slope slightly downwards towards the centre of the wall, and they are all fitted with the greatest exactitude into each other.

The “Porta Grande” is so called because it is better preserved than any of the others. It is an imposing structure, more than six yards wide and eight high, and it is defended by a colossal, round tower. This tower is one of the few Cyclopic erections which is not built against the cliff and which can be seen from all sides. In consequence of this isolation the stones have all been carefully squared instead of being left irregular.

In the inner surface of the wall near the great gate there is a curve which, according to some, is accidental, the arch

The Mountains of Latium

being unknown in polygon architecture, but which according to others was intentional. The gateway which leads to Cori is called Testa di Bovi.

The towns belonging to the second class of those built upon the heights are very numerous. The Middle Ages plunged man once more into a life of war and rapine which, under the commercial civilisation of the Romans, had become a thing of the past; Goths, Longobards, Saracens swept through the country, baronial strife helped to drive the inhabitants to the hills, and the plain was deserted. Around the towns then built the pastoral life remained the same as that led by the first inhabitants, and the folds of the hills that encircle the Latin Land are still the dwelling-place of the sons of the races who built cities and surrounded them with cyclopeic walls before Rome existed.

“Four distinct races,” says Abbate, author of the excellent “Guida della Provincia di Roma,” “can be recognised in the Latin mountains. The first is found in the hills of Latium, a tall, active vigorous race with irregular features, slightly turned-up noses, large black eyes, and an expression at once proud and gentle. This race, which represents the Latins and Volscians, disappears entirely as we descend to the plains.

“The mountains of Alatri and Veroli shelter another race, shorter and stouter. Their regular features would make them beautiful were it not that the eyebrows invariably meet over the nose, giving to the otherwise handsome face a wild, fierce expression in keeping with the goatskins which they wear as trousers. One seems to recognise in them the descendants of the terrible Ernicians.

“In the neighbourhood of Corneto and on the western slope of Monte Cimino we find a tall, graceful race with regular features and a sweet expression. They are few in

The Roman Campagna

number, but the handsomest men in the province are to be found among them. They are held to be the representatives of the noble Etruscans.

“Finally, in the Sabines, a fourth type has been preserved; the men are short and wiry, characterised by straight profiles, symmetrical features, large eyes, and abundant curly hair. We see in them the descendants of the companions of Tatius and Numa.

“With the exception of these isolated groups the inhabitants of the Latin Land do not show any one decided type; all the races of the world have contributed some of their features to this people, in whom we find the high cheekbones and the snub noses of the Goth, the aquiline nose of the Saracen, the fair hair of the Norman, the straight black hair of the Greek; in short, a mixture of the features of all the invaders of the region.”

The women are remarkably handsome; whatever be their social rank, their beauty is classic and majestic. They are not tall, but are strongly built and carry themselves well; their features are regular, often ideally perfect, and their eyes large and black.

The picturesque costumes which both men and women used to wear are fast falling into disuse, but in the less “civilised” villages they are still to be found, although shorn of their ancient splendour. They vary in the different districts, the most noteworthy being that of the region in the Volscian Mountains called “Cioceria,” because the inhabitants wear “cioce.” These are shoes made of a flat piece of skin, the edges of which are laced up round the foot with narrow leather thongs. The legs are swathed in strips of linen.

The men’s costume consists of a blue jacket, short trousers, scarlet waistcoat with gilt buttons, and a sugar-loaf

The Mountains of Latium

hat. The women wear short bright-coloured skirts, square woollen aprons with a band of embroidery, white or red head-cloths, and coloured corsets.

The "Ciociari" are of the pure Latin race; they are subtle, clever, and sarcastic and at the same time very sensitive. They are the descendants of the wise and vigilant men who founded Rome and made it the sovereign of the world. This tenacious race is as fresh and robust as though it were at the dawn of its career instead of having a long history behind it.

Will there be a new dawn for it, such as Rome awaits for all her sons ?

CHAPTER XIV

FAREWELL TO THE LATIN LAND

FROM my Note-book : "On the Via Cassia at sunset :

"The road, two thousand years old, flushed with the glow of the setting sun, is clothed in a wondrous beauty ; from the flat furrows to the rosy heights of the Sabine Mountains, the ethereal tints melt into each other in luminous harmony ; and over all silence reigns.

"An old farmhouse, built against a tower near which the fox-hounds sometimes meet in the season, stands in the midst of the spacious, undulating landscape ; it seems part of the land itself, for its dark colour and old tufa stones give it the appearance of being a natural growth of the soil rather than the work of man.

"Farther on, half hidden by an undulation of the ground, is a village of huts, miserable, cone-shaped, mud-coloured huts ; a 'buttero' rides towards them with a herd of wild colts.

"The rays of the setting sun catch the edges of the tufts of asphodel turning them to gold at the foot of a mound, two cypresses stand out against the sky and the voice of evening whispers through their tips, still touched by the dying sunlight.

"Near me is a hayrick propped up with poles ; beside it stands a shepherd, he takes up his bagpipes and begins to

Farewell to the Latin Land

play to his grazing flock. His music is full of melancholy, and the pipes are those of Tithyrus which once more breathe their lament to the fields.

“In this magic hour there passes before me a vision, fleeting but clear of all this Latin Land.

“The horizon is bathed in the sunset glow, and beyond it I see the shady waterfalls of Anio and their hills from whence come waking dreams: the eddying river winds through the meadows towards the sun-kissed peace of the broadening Tiber.

“Amidst the forests that clothe the hills I see once more the imperial villas with their gardens and orange groves; there, round the mighty boles of branching trees, spring little armies of anemones, whilst in the starry shade of the palms wild irises grow embroidered in black and gold.

“And as well as the vision of beauty there comes the vision of the desolation of the arid wastes of the Campagna and of the fever-stricken Marshes: stagnant waters cover the ruins of once populous cities, whilst on the banks of these dead lagoons knotted meshes of bramble climb over fallen columns and broken fragments of architecture.

“As the shore-line, where runs the old Via Aurelia amidst hard-leaved wild oleanders, crosses my vision, I see the dark towers of Olevola and Vittoria outlined against the wild sea and that of Badino with its alarm bell and the two stone pines that seem to watch over it; whilst on the other side, beyond the Marshes, amidst the white waving tufts of flowering reeds, shimmers the little lake of Ninfa, reflecting its tower and ruins.

“On the horizon, I see again the villages clustered on the heights of the violet-tinted mountains beside the dark patches of brushwood; below them the burying-places, sanctified by the prayers of the humble.

The Roman Campagna

“And the lakes, the blue eyes of the Campagna, shine in the last rays of the setting sun; Bracciano glitters in the north like a luminous sword. . . .

“The last echoes of the shepherd’s wistful music die away as he turns his steps to the fold; and as night throws her mantle over the plain, thousands of memories rise and hover round us. Here the wandering forefathers of the race paused to offer sacrifices to the goddess Spring, protectress of the fecundity of their flocks; the shepherds lighted fires of straw and jumped over them three times and with a laurel branch sprinkled themselves with holy water; then came the founders of the square-walled city with its ‘pomerium,’ the wall of the gods, traced by the sacerdotal plough. Then the Roman eagle soared high, the many arches of the aqueducts began their march towards the mountains and the Consular roads passed out beyond those mountains, carrying Roman law to distant nations; and by these same roads the Barbarian hordes descended on the land, and by them journeyed the innumerable bands of pilgrims to the Holy City, the sight of which filled them with awe and wonder.

“This is the hour when Mazzini’s invocation rises in the mind, and I re-echo his words, ‘Come with me to the vast Campagna which, thirteen centuries ago, was the meeting-place of nations, that I may remind you where beats the heart of Italy. Here Goths, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Erulians, Longobards, and innumerable other Barbarians descended to imbibe unconsciously the civilisation of Rome before turning to over-run other lands; and the dust which your foot disturbs is the dust of nations.

“The vast Campagna lies hushed, and over the ample solitude hovers a sadness like that which haunts a graveyard, filling the soul with melancholy. But he whose soul

Farewell to the Latin Land

has been nourished by lofty aspirations and purified by sorrow, hears under his feet, in the silence of even when the sun's last ray has faded from the horizon, an indistinct murmur of fermenting life as if innumerable multitudes were waiting the 'fiat' of a quickening word to rise and repeople this land, which seems made to be the meeting-place of nations. I felt this thrill of life and I bowed my head, for it seemed to me prophetic. Go and stand on the Via Cassia, which winds its way through volcanic rocks and Etruscan remains and look to the south; in the midst of the wide expanse there rises an isolated dome like a beacon in the ocean, the sign of a distant greatness. Bow down and worship; there beats the heart of Italy; there stands Rome, majestic, eternal."

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